

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. Copyright No.

Shelf B9

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



THE
RELIGION OF THE FUTURE.

BY

REV. DAVID JAMES BURRELL, D. D.



40715-2'

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,
10 EAST 23d STREET, NEW YORK.

(1894) A

BR85
B9

COPYRIGHT, 1894,
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY.

CONTENTS.



The Religion of the Future	PAGE 7
A Wonderful Prayer	13
Sanballat and Tobiah; How They Hindered the Builders.....	21
The Death Warrant of the Huguenots.....	29
The Lepers of Samaria	39
No Excuse for Unbelief	47
The Church and the Saloon	56
Hobab of Akaba; or, Why Should I be a Member of the Church?	66
The Glory of this Mystery	74
The Career of a Fast Young Man	81
At the Horns of the Altar.....	89
“We Three Kings of Orient Are:” A Christmas Meditation....	97
Sandals for the Journey: A New Year’s Meditation	104
The Duty of Fault-Finding	112
The Branded Conscience.....	120
The Holy Ghost	128
Walking with God	137
The Army of the Poor	145
Nathan Hale	154
St. Joan of Arc	161

The Appeal to Cæsar	170
The Crown of Thorns.....	180
Good Out of Nazareth	190
The Resurrection Here and Now.....	199
Simon of Cyrene	208
Assurance	216
Woe to Ariel.....	224
A Text of Wonders.....	232
Why Should I Pray?	239
How Shall I Pray?.....	247
The American Sabbath	255
The Barren Fig-Tree	265
A Profitable Life.....	274
Who is This That Cometh from Edom?.....	282
Jonah at Nineveh	289
The Ninevites in Judgment.....	297

THE RELIGION OF THE FUTURE.

“The old is better.” Luke 5:39.

WE are immensely fond of saying that this is a progressive age. It is true beyond all question. Fashions change over night. It is a great way from Watt's teakettle to the Baldwin locomotive, a great way from Franklin's kite to Edison's dynamos. Old things have passed away, all things have become new. The flint-lock musket, the spinning-wheel and the stage-coach are put away among the relics. We have new ways of doing things, new ways of thinking, new laws, new moral conceptions, new sciences and philosophies. Why should we not also have a new religion? There have been thousands of years of theological research and controversy since the old Bible was sealed with a *finis*. Must these go for nothing? Are we no wiser than our fathers respecting the great verities? Is it not high time that our religion should be brought up abreast of the *Zeitgeist*? “When I was a child I thought as a child, spake as a child, understood as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things.” The world has reached maturity. Ring out the old! Ring in the new!

But let us be sure we are right. Religion is a matter of so great importance that we can afford to be deliberate about it. When William of Orange was crossing the Channel to assume the English crown he was greatly

weighed down by a sense of responsibility. It was a foggy night, and as he paced the deck he heard the captain calling ever and anon to the man at the wheel, "Steady! steady!" That was his watchword in after years. It is a good watchword for all who sail along the troubled seas of controversy in quest of truth. In a case whose issues reach out into eternity it is the manifest part of wisdom to make haste slowly. There are some things whose fashion never changes, such as air and water and sunshine. May not religion be of this sort? At any rate it behooves us, in this matter, to "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good."

In any religion whatsoever there must be three primary conceptions; to wit, God, man, and the relation between them. The word religion is from the Latin *re-ligare*, meaning to bind back. Religion is that which restores the interrupted relations of the heavenly Father with his children. In the Religion of the Future—which the advanced thinkers of our time have projected for us—we have a new conception as to each of these fundamental facts.

I. *As to God.* There is no danger of atheism. A hundred years ago a frenzy of that sort took possession of the people. In the Corps Legislatif of France it was solemnly resolved that God should be no more recognized in the affairs of the nation. His name was studiously profaned and his laws were violently trodden under foot. Then began the Reign of Terror. Mobs marched through the streets mingling blasphemies with their demands for bread and freedom. The heads of the nobility fell under the guillotine. The gutters of Paris ran with blood. Meanwhile the legend, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," stared in grim satire from the dead walls. Napoleon said to La

Place, "I see no mention of God in your system of theology." "No, sire," was the answer, "we have no longer any need of that hypothesis." A half-century of anarchy and social disorder was the sequel. Montesquieu said, "God is as necessary as freedom to the welfare of France." One such experiment is enough. There will never be another serious attempt to dispense with God.

But the drift of advanced thought in our time is towards an utter enfeeblement of God. He is represented as law, all-pervading force, universal soul, a "something not ourselves that maketh for righteousness." Liberal thinkers would depersonalize him, devitalize him. They would leave us a God without eyes to see, a heart to pity, or hands to help—the mere ghost of a God.

1. There is no room here for Providence. It was Herder's beautiful thought that there are three emanations from Deity, namely, *licht, leben, liebe*: that his light is manifest in the glory of nature, his life in organism and growth, and his love in the human soul. In the new theology there might be a lingering of divine light, somewhat of life also; but not by the wildest stretch of the imagination could an impersonal God be conceived as loving us. "He doth not see nor consider."

2. Nor is there room for prayer. To what should one pray? To force? To star dust or bathybios? Shall the weary and troubled address their *misereres* to the wild wind or to the primordial germ? Jean Paul—in those dark days when France swung loose from all her moorings—came with his burden to the Venus of Milo in the Louvre. He clasped her feet and prayed; he lifted his eyes, and lo, she had no arms to help! The only answer to the prayer of one who rejects the great Father is silence. There is no voice nor answer.

“And still the red sands fall within the glass,
 And still the shadows round the dial sweep,
 And still the water-clock doth drip and weep;
 And that is all.”

II. *As to Man.* We have been accustomed to regard man as the masterpiece of God's creation. He formed him, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of an immortal life. Man is thus the child of God; impressed with his image, able to confer with him respecting eternal things; “having,” as Carlyle says, “the geometry of heaven in his brain.” But we are now asked to believe that man is the creature of circumstance, the product of certain conditions, such as air, food, nursing, medicines and education. He is a development from the lower orders—in accordance with the inviolate laws of heredity, natural selection and survival of the fittest. What then?

1. Then, of course, there can be no moral responsibility. For how can a creature of circumstance be responsible to an impersonal God? Sin is simply a disease of the nerve tissue. Medication must therefore supplant punishment. The ruffian who plunders your house or aims his dagger at your heart is no more to blame than your infant for falling out of its cradle. Men are what their environment makes them. A snail crawls into the road; and the sun shrivels it or the wheels of the king's chariot crush it. So is a man in the grip of destiny.

2. And there can be no immortality. For what is there to be immortal? The brain is phosphorus. Thought is the result of atomic friction. The soul is practically as material as the body; and death gives the *coup de grace* to the whole man. The hope of life beyond the grave is an illusion. “Death ends all!” Go write it on the tombstones of those whom you have hoped to see

again in a better world; go write it across the family register in "the old ha' Bible"—the awful sentence that, in the Reign of Terror, was written across the archway of Père la Chaise: *Death Ends All*. And then return to your homes resolved to fill life full of careless mirth. Let us eat and drink and be merry: to-morrow we die!

3. No basis of character is left. For character stands on these two pillars, Responsibility and Immortality. Drag them down and the whole fabric falls asunder. We can understand now what Benjamin Franklin meant when, reading the proof-sheets of "The Age of Reason," he said to its author, Thomas Paine, "Oh, friend Thomas, burn the book! Do not unchain that tiger. If the American people are what they are under the beneficent influence of religion, what would they be without it?"

III. *As to the relation of man with God.* We have been taught to believe that the filial harmony was disturbed; that sin had opened a vast chasm between an outraged God and his rebellious children—a chasm bridged by the cross, by which we who were afar off are brought nigh again and permitted to enter into spiritual and eternal life. This is the "traditional" view. But it is ruled out of the new religion. The advanced views of our liberal theologians leave no place for it.

1. The "old, old story"—so far as any real or exclusive power to save is concerned—must go. Our fathers made much of the blood: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin;" and "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." But there is no blood in the new religion. Such terms as satisfaction and ransom and reconciliation are quite obsolete. The repellent aspects of "the butcher theory" of the atonement are all dispensed with, and the offence of the cross gives way to

the sweetness and light of *le bon Dieu* and the beauty of ethical culture.

2. Nor can creeds be tolerated. Dogmatism is abhorrent to liberal minds. *Credo* is a worn out shibboleth. We used to think that a man was scarcely a vertebrate unless he could lay his hand on something and say, "I believe this." There were those who took pleasure in the historic creeds of Christendom. We were wont to comfort ourselves in such assurances as "I know that my Redeemer liveth," and "I know whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him until that day." In fact, however, we know nothing, we can believe nothing. "For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight." We may surmise, hope, venture an opinion; but as to believing or dogmatizing, the time for that has gone by. "I know nothing," as Fichte says; "not even that I know nothing." All assertions must be made with a qualifying "Perhaps" or "It may be." This is liberalism. Anything else is bigotry.

3. And the Bible must go. We are given to understand that it is already on the way. Is not the Mosaic cosmogony disproven? And the narratives of the Flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Jonah and the Ninevites, Job, Daniel in Babylon, are they not shown by our Biblical experts to be mere fables, Jesus to the contrary notwithstanding? The historical portions of the Old Testament are, upon the same authority, as untrustworthy as Diedrich Knickerbocker. And the prophecies are no better; "the great body of Messianic prophecy" being unfulfilled, and impossible of fulfilment "because its time has passed by." Thus the Book must be put away among the other musty parchments of the olden time. Farewell, old Book! Thou hast been a beacon to men

and nations through all the centuries. In thy clear light the world has grown purer and holier. Under thy gracious influence truth and justice and benevolence have gladdened the desert wastes. But thou hast been a fetish long enough. Farewell! The world has outlived thee.

But how dark it is! The sun is gone, the moon extinguished, the stars out. The world is left to grope bewildered in unbroken gloom. All hope and gladness have vanished. The voices of God himself, which we have been wont to hear in nature and providence, in heaven above and earth beneath, are hushed. We have come to the silence and solitude of an Egyptian night.

But, beloved, this shall never be! By God's grace this shall never be! The hands upon the dial move forward from the morning of creation to the millennial noon. God lives and reigns and keeps watch above his own!

The religion of the Scriptures was adjusted in the beginning to all possible mutations of time. Nothing has occurred which its divine Author did not anticipate. The Spirit of God is the spirit in the wheels of progress. When Cardinal Richelieu was superintending the removal of his ancestral chateau, preparatory to the building of a magnificent palace, he bade the workmen spare the inner chamber of the house. It was there his eyes had first opened to the light; there his mother had lulled him to sleep upon her breast. He could not see it destroyed, but required his architect to conform the plans of his palace to that sacred room. Thus the great temple of progress, rising splendidly about us, has the birth-chamber at its centre. There shines the benignant glory of the cross. Around that inner sanctuary, with its Ark of the Covenant, the glorious fabric rises. The old truths stand:

God himself is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. All abiding things have their centre in him.

It is related of Lord Chesterfield that, while visiting Paris, he was entertained at the table of a distinguished lady of the Encyclopedia, a bitter foe of Christianity. She said to him, "My lord, I am informed that your English Parliament is composed of five or six hundred of the most profound and brilliant thinkers: this being so, will you explain to me how you account for the fact that, under their authority, the obsolete religion of the Nazarene Carpenter is still maintained as the religion of the realm?" "Madam," he replied, "it is a mere temporary makeshift. We are casting about for something better; when that is discovered Christianity must give way."

Ah, the world has been casting about during all these centuries for something better and has not found it. Undevout thinkers will continue to search for the better religion by the light of the midnight oil; kings and potentates may search for it, as they have often done, by the light of Smithfield fires and *autos-da-fê*. And meanwhile men and women will go on loving and believing in Jesus: troubled souls will run to him for succor and deliverance; sinners will search the old Bible for the hope of deliverance and find it at the cross; and the kings of the earth will bring their glory and honor unto him. The song of the redeemed below will swell louder and louder, and the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. And then it will be known that the Religion of the Future is none other than the blessed old religion of Bethlehem and Calvary, of the open sepulchre and the endless life.

A WONDERFUL PRAYER.

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” EPHESIANS 3:14-19.

A MAN of prayer is a man of power. To bow before God is like bending to drink from a flowing brook. It renews our strength. It puts omnipotence at our command.

“A good man’s prayers
Will from the deepest dungeon climb to heaven’s height
And bring a blessing down.”

It is prayer that “makes the world go round.” An ocean steamer holds its way calmly and steadily towards its desired haven because down in the engine-room the stokers are at work, grimy and stripped to the waist, feeding the furnaces. Who knows what would happen to this old world of ours were it not for the multitude of earnest people who, in the secret place, are earnestly pleading for its welfare!

The man of our text was a prisoner. He had been sent to the Prætorian camp in chains for preaching the gospel of Christ. His enemies thought to end his influence in that way. Ah, love laughs at locksmiths!

There's no cutting the sinews of a devout man. You may put the cabalistic "H. R." after his name in the roster, but it's another matter to "honorably retire" him. If you lay him on a sick bed, his patience will be as eloquent as Chrysostom. Banish him to a desert island, he will plant aromatic herbs there whose fragrance will be wafted far and wide. Kill him, bury him, roll a stone against his sepulchre, and his memory, like the ghost of John the Baptist, will walk up and down with messages of truth.

So this apostle, with a chain on either arm, was still by virtue of his prayers, a mighty power for good. His devout heart was like a galvanic battery; it enabled him, despite all hindrances, to commune with distant friends and influence their destinies. He is praying, here, for his former parishioners at Ephesus. It is a wonderful prayer. Its earnest words come tumbling over each other, like heralds hastening from battle to carry news of victory.

The one thing desired is **STRENGTH**: "I pray that ye may be strengthened with might by the Holy Spirit in the inner man." In Paul's opinion a Christian had no right to be weak. To Timothy, his spiritual son, he wrote, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." To the Colossians, "We desire that ye might be strengthened with all might according to his glorious power unto all patience, and long-suffering, and joyfulness." To the Corinthians, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." And again to the Ephesians, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." To be strong is a duty; therefore to be weak is a sin. "Why art thou lean, being the king's son?"

The strength here prayed for is spiritual strength;

strength "in the inner man." Paul makes much of this inner man. "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." The outward man is but the frail tabernacle of the inward man; death, like a simoom, rends the tent to tatters, but the man himself, the real man, lives on. They say that Bismarck has been smitten with paralysis; that he goes about with faltering steps, his right arm dangling at his side: but whisper to him "Sedan!" or "Alsace-Lorraine!" and see his form straighten and his eye flash. His age falls from him like a garment. The eye of "the inner man" is still bright, and his natural force unabated. And this is the divine, the immortal man.

The day came when Paul was led out along the road towards Ostia to his execution. There were priests and beggars and Arab merchants and sailors and camel-drivers who turned to look. What they saw was an armed guard with a Jewish culprit in chains; a man of "mean presence" outwardly, but destined to walk through history like a giant. The place was reached; there was the flash of a heavy sword; a head fell from the block; "There's an end of this zealot," said the executioner to his men. Little they knew! The real Paul cannot be slain. He is destined to be heard from. The "inner man" will walk up and down in Church councils, a participant in all great theological controversies, until the end of time. His death is but the widening of his parish.

"Out of sight sinks the stone
In the deep sea of time, but the circles sweep on!"

It is this inner man, therefore, which should engross our care. "Why take ye thought, saying, What shall we eat, or, What shall we drink, or, Wherewithal shall we be

clothed?" To expend our solicitude upon our physical wants is as foolish as it was for Nero to busy himself in drawing sand for the arena while his kingdom was falling asunder. All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of the outward man as the flower of grass. Character is the abiding thing. "I marvel, O Athenians," said Socrates in the market-place, "that ye pamper and adorn your bodies, while the immortal part of you starves and shivers!"

This prayer of Paul for the strengthening of the inner man is followed by three specific desires, each involving a great mystery. To partake of these mysteries is to possess one's self of wisdom and power; to enter cordially into them is to grow unto the full stature of manhood in Christ.

First mystery: the indwelling of Christ. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." This is distinctly a Christian tenet. Who ever heard of the indwelling Buddha or of the indwelling Mohammed? Our Lord frequently dwelt upon this precious truth. As in the parable of the Vine and its Branches: "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." As when he said to Jude: "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." As in his sacerdotal prayer for his disciples: "I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." And as in the blessed promise: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man will hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me."

The clew to this mystery is faith: "that Christ may dwell in your hearts *by faith.*" Faith is the hand outstretched to draw the bolt, to lift the latch, to open the door and let Christ in. To thus welcome Christ is to make certain our growth in spiritual life. To appropriate him is to partake of his omnipotence. To believe is to be strong: "according to your faith be it unto you."

It is related by Mr. Moody that, after having his name on the church roster for more than twenty years, he became convinced that there was something beyond, a glorious measure of ability and usefulness to which he had not attained; and for this he began to pray. One night, immediately following the Chicago fire, he walked the streets pleading for the gift of the Holy Ghost and power. At a late hour he retired to his room and fell upon his knees resolved that there should be no more reservation; that the last bolt should be drawn and the door thrown wide to the waiting Christ. Then the blessing came—came so plentifully that he found himself walking up and down his room crying, "O Lord, stay now thy hand! No more, no more!" And since that night the constant blessing of heaven has been upon his work; insomuch that, as he humbly testifies, no service in all these years has passed without its garnering of fruits. And is not this possible, under like conditions, to every follower of Christ? Oh for willingness to be strong: to bid the Saviour enter and wholly possess us!

Second mystery: the knowledge of the love of Christ. "That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

The greatest thing in the universe is God's love in Jesus Christ. Who shall measure it? "There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the sea." It would appear that Paul is here making, for the benefit of the Ephesian Christians, a comparison of this love with the dimensions of their own temple of Diana. That magnificent fabric was four hundred and twenty feet long and above two hundred wide, its arches resting upon one hundred and twenty-seven monoliths each sixty feet in height. It was a proverb, "The sun in its journey sees nothing more glorious than the Ephesian temple." Yet it furnished but a mean figure for this comparison. To what shall God's love be likened? Its length is through all ages; its breadth is the latitude of the universe; its profundity is unfathomable, and its dome is glorious with celestial light. The smallest word in that great sentence, "God *so* loved the world," is larger than all human philosophy. And yet this mighty truth may be grasped; this unknowable may be known.

How? What is the clew of this mystery? It is here given: "That ye, *being rooted and grounded in love*, may be able to comprehend." Love alone can comprehend love. It cannot be reached by objective analysis. How do we know the light? By studying Tyndall's essays? Nay, rather by seeing the sun come forth like a bridegroom from his chamber, climb to the zenith by ever brightening steps and go down again to his couch amid the crimson glories. The thing that we know becomes a part of us. Apprehension is putting the hand to a thing; comprehension is closing the hand around it. A man may easily understand the chemistry of water yet die for want of a cup of it.

A letter comes to me from a dear old-fashioned friend,

written in stilted phrases and a cramped hand. You read it and smile; there's nothing there for you. Ah, but she's not your mother. Give me the letter, now; how it warms my heart and bedews my eyes! Love only can comprehend love. God's goodness is Sanscrit to all but his children. If you would understand, you must yourself be "rooted" in it, like a tree drawing its life from a fountain beneath the hills. If you would comprehend, you must be "grounded" on it, like a temple resting on a rock. Love is the clew of the mystery of love.

Third mystery: "That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." To be thus filled is to be satisfied. In him are all the riches of wisdom and knowledge. At his right hand are pleasures for evermore. Whosoever has possessed himself of God can want no more. "In hym ye ben fylled." What is this--the fulness of God? The fulness of God dwelling in the soul of a mortal man!

And how shall we enter into possession of it? The clew of this greatest of mysteries awaits us in the heavenly realms. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. In that day we shall know. In that day we shall be satisfied. The divine glory will flood our souls, and we shall be filled with the fulness of God.

Meanwhile it is ours to long and aspire. If we may not realize the vast possibilities of Christian life and usefulness we may at the least covet them earnestly, and approach them nearer every day. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst; for they shall be filled.

If we fall short of our full privilege it is not because of any reluctance on God's part. He is willing to bless unto the uttermost. Large prayers honor him. When a cer-

tain follower of King Philip asked, as a reward for some signal service, the revenues of an Asian province, the prime minister cried out at the presumption; but the king said, "Let his request be granted. His bold demand honors my magnanimity." Thus God is pleased by large drafts upon his goodness. "Open your mouths wide," he says, "and I will fill them." Let us be eager, like the devotees of Eleusis, to enter into the mysteries. To have Christ dwelling in us, to know the love of God that passeth knowledge, and to hold up one's heart like a chalice to be filled at the infinite Fountain—this is to be strengthened with might in the inner man. And going on from grace to grace, from glory to glory, we shall know at length what this means: to be filled with all the fulness of God.

SANBALLAT AND TOBIAH; HOW THEY HINDERED THE BUILDERS.

“It came to pass that when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabians and the Ammonites and the Ashdodites heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem went forward (R. V.) then they were very wroth, and they conspired all of them together to hinder it.” NEHEMIAH 4:7.

ONE moonlight night, 445 B. C., a man accompanied by a modest retinue rode through the streets of Jerusalem. He was profoundly moved by the desolation on every side—for “the walls of the city were broken down and the gates thereof were burned with fire.” This was the cup-bearer or prime minister of Artaxerxes, who had come all the way from Persia to inspect “the city of his fathers’ sepulchres.” He had heard a rumor that “the remnant of the captivity,” that is, such as remained in Jerusalem after the successive deportations, had been prevented by the intimidations of their foes from rebuilding the ruined walls. He besought the king’s permission and repaired at once to Jerusalem. “And I arose in the night,” he says, “and some few men with me; neither told I any man what God had put into my heart to do.” He rode out towards the south into the valley of Hinnom, turned northward past the Pool of Siloam, then westward and southward, and so, completing the circuit, entered again by the valley gate. And wherever he went there was naught but desolation, dust and ashes; debris filling the streets. The next morning he summoned the priests and nobles and laid the matter plainly before them. “Up, let

us build," said he, "that we be no more a reproach." He recited the Lord's goodness and assured them of his blessing, saying, "The God of heaven, he will prosper us." The rulers were stimulated by his earnest words, and answered with one accord, "Let us rise up and build!"

Our life is structural. We walk in the midst of ruins. Human nature is a ruin; magnificent in its decay, but still a ruin. Its dreary solitudes are haunted by the lingering echoes of past songs and prayers. Over its crumbling archway is an inscription, "Here once dwelt God." The prime duty of every man is to restore this lonely ruin to its pristine glory. This is character building: to prepare the soul for the indwelling of the Spirit of God.

Society, also, is in ruins. The work of the rebuilders is sadly needed. Evil lusts and appetites, like toads and adders, hide under the mould. Envy and malice and selfishness, like owls and bitterns, make their nests among the crumbling arches. A new science is born in these days called sociology, whose function is to repair the waste places of human fellowship. It is indeed a higher sort of architecture, a true *edification*, or temple building; and it behooves all earnest men to engage in it.

The world itself is a ruin. So fair at creation that God, beholding, pronounced it "very good," it has been so ravaged by sin that yonder moon, burnt over long centuries ago, is not more scarred or unsightly. The trail of the serpent is over all. The cross was reared for its redemption nineteen hundred years ago and still there are sixteen hundred millions of its inhabitants who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death. Here indeed is work for the builder. The kingdom of God rises so slowly. The laborers are so few. Oh, men of Israel, let us rise and build!

There are multitudes of people who seem actuated by no nobler purpose than to make life yield its utmost of enjoyment; who go through the world as tramps go through a village, in at one end and out at the other, with all their possessions in a bundle over their shoulders, asking only a hedge to sleep under and provisions by the way. But life is worth living only for what it promises of the life beyond. Blessed is the man who can interpret aright these cabalistic words on the moss-grown portal of Melrose:

“The earth goes on the earth glittering with gold;
 The earth goes on the earth sooner than it should;
 The earth builds on the earth castles and towers;
 The earth says to the earth, ‘All this is ours.’”

The wise man is he who is ever building and who, like Piso, “builds for eternity.”

Here is the difficulty, however: the moment a man undertakes to build—in the glorious fabric of character, for the betterment of the community or the setting up of righteousness on earth—the adversary draws near.

I. Open hostility. “Now when Sanballat and Tobiah heard that our hands were strengthened for the work they said, What is this thing that ye do? Will ye rebel against the king?” Rebellion! Aye. A good life is in downright defiance of the prince of this world. Moral earnestness is treason against the evil one. It is not to be expected, therefore, that a builder on Zion’s walls should be unmolested. Is the servant greater than his Lord? “If they have hated me,” said Jesus, “shall they not also hate you?”

The Lord be praised that the days of the ax and fagot, of blood council and Inquisition, have gone by! But there are current modes of opposition as effective as rack

or thumbscrew. The voice of calumny is not hushed. The moral boycott is in force. Do you urge the temperance reform? You are a fanatic. Are you in favor of Sabbath observance? You are a puritanical bigot. Do you lift your voice in behalf of pure politics? You are a mugwump. It is an uncomfortable thing to fall out with the fashion any way.

It is recorded of St. Anthony, the father of monachism, that being persecuted for righteousness' sake he took refuge in a cave by the river Nile; but there the red eyes of devils leered upon him, the air was resonant with epithets, snares were spread before his feet, not a moment was he permitted to rest. We also have our St. Anthony, as worthy of canonization as any old-time ascetic. He has made himself obnoxious to the Arabians and the Ammonites and the Ashdodites by his unceasing hostility to social vices. Threats, personal violence, and imprisonment are the least of his sufferings. For years he has stood up under an unremitting rain of detraction and misrepresentation. In his endeavor to suppress the circulation of obscene literature through the United States mails he was forced to confront the violent opposition of fifty thousand infidel friends of so-called "personal liberty." No epithets have been too vile to apply to him. And bearing this with Christian patience, modesty and fortitude he has gone upon his way. God bless this valiant reformer! This is the stuff that nineteenth century saints are made of.

II. But the resources of the enemy are not exhausted in open hostility. If they cannot hinder the work of the builders by angry denunciation they will laugh them out of it. It is related that, when Sanballat and Tobiah were made aware of the futility of their threats by the sound of

trowels upon the ruined walls, they "took great indignation." They stood under the walls, within hearing of the Samaritan army, and made sport of the builders.

"What do these feeble Jews?" asked Sanballat. "Is it a fortification that they build, or an altar for sacrifice? Will they revive the stones of this rubbish heap? And will they finish the work to-day, or to-morrow, think you?"

"Ha, ha!" laughed Tobiah, glancing towards the workmen; "it's a wall, I reckon; but if a fox should run over it he would break it down!"

Then a burst of laughter echoed from the hillsides where the Samarites stood beholding.

"Hearken, O God! For we are despised, and they provoke thee to anger." Thus Nehemiah raised his voice in prayer. And God heard, and enheartened the people; and the work went on.

Was ever a man in earnest yet without provoking derision? More people die of ridicule than of poison, or cholera, or cannon-balls. Was the world ever yet willing that a poor fellow should rebuild character out of the dust and ashes of a mislived past? "Oh, come now," say his companions; "a glass wont hurt you. Do n't be a chump. Going to join the Holy Club? Ha, ha! Come on!" But, God bless the struggler! In the church at Treviso is a chain with the imprint of a finger on it. They say that one night Emiliani awoke in his dungeon and saw an angel standing near. "Arise and be free," said the angel; and at his touch the prisoner's chain fell off. The Angel of Deliverance is ever near. God helps the man who helps himself. A word of prayer, "Hearken, O God!" is answered by the sound of breaking chains.

The man likewise who busies himself for the better-

ment of the community must expect to be made sport of. The dives will keep open and vice will rustle past, and magistrates—God save the mark!—will chuckle, “What are you going to do about it?” Something of that sort happened when the ruddy son of Jesse went down into the valley of Elah. The Israelites smiled at his presumption, the Philistines roared at him, his own brethren guyed him, saying, “Go back to your sheep in the wilderness!” and the giant shouted, “Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?” But when the ruddy youth came up from the valley dragging after him Goliath’s gory head, ah, then the surrounding hills reëchoed his praises! The man who succeeds is derided no more.

An enterprise along the broader lines of evangelization is sure to provoke the world’s contempt. William Cary, for proposing the missionary conquest of India, was dubbed “the consecrated cobbler;” but the universal church does him reverence to-day. What shouts of laughter greeted the early efforts of the Salvation Army: the drum and tambourine and flag of blood and fire were quite vulgar. But now—ah, God and time make all things right. We are glad to pause and hearken, and say, “God bless them!” when the procession goes past on its way to the slums, singing,

“He’s the Lily of the Valley, the Bright and Morning Star;
He’s the fairest of ten thousand to my soul!”

III. One thing still remains for Sanballat and Tobiah when open enmity and ridicule have failed. “Come, let us meet together in the valley of Ono,” they say; “why should we quarrel? Let us talk matters over and arrange a truce.”

There is nothing more dangerous to holy resolution

than this—the temptation to compromise. Compromise never won a good cause yet. Our country has suffered from it. Our missionary boards have suffered from it. “Nothing is settled,” said Abraham Lincoln, “until it is settled right.” There is no neutral ground, no valley of Ono, in matters of spiritual import.

Where shall we compromise? In questions pertaining to truth? Nay, the truth against the world!

In matters of conscience? Nay, let the old Roman answer, “*Fiat justitia, ruat cælum!*” Do right, though the heavens come rattling down about you.

In our devotion to the Master’s cause? Nay, “Sell all that thou hast and come and follow me.” Our Lord demands an entire surrender and faithfulness unto death—faithfulness like that of the lighthouse-keeper at Minot Ledge. The storm had raged all day; at evening the lights were kindled and the bell struck the passing hours. The people watching from the shore saw the lighthouse swaying like a bulrush in the storm. Still the light shone and the bell rang through the mist. At length a mighty wave rolled in over the reef. The people looked and listened: the light was out—the bell was hushed. Thus may Death find us all at the post of duty!

The watchword of Israel in those days of trial was, “Remember the Lord!” The guards repeated it as they patrolled the walls; the workmen cheered each other on with that brave countersign, “Remember the Lord—the Lord that delivered his servants from the fiery furnace and from Pharaoh’s host!” Fifty-two days were they rebuilding the ruins; and then they marched about the streets waving lulab branches and singing, “Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!”

Up, brethren, and let us build. Let us repair the waste places of our personal character, of society, and of this sin-cursed world. If God be for us, who shall be against us? "Stand fast, Craig Ellachie!" The day of rejoicing will come. Our Lord Zerubbabel will bring forth the headstone of the corner and lay it amid shoutings of saints and angels, "Grace, grace unto it!"

THE
DEATH WARRANT OF THE HUGUE-
NOTS.*

“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” Rev. 6:9, 10.

IN 1450 A. D. the Mazarin Bible made its appearance. This was a notable event. A copy of the Scriptures had previously cost a sum of money equal to a year's wages of a laboring man. The Word was now within the reach of all. The thing looked like witchcraft. The copies on comparison were found to be precisely uniform—more evidence of the black art. The publication was traced to the workshop of Faust, who was arrested and cast into prison; nor was he released until he revealed the secret of his magic art.

The people now began to read. The weaver at his loom, the shoemaker at his bench, took pleasure in the sacred book. It was a great day for common folk. The entrance of God's word gave light. But that way lay danger to the Holy See. One of the cardinals said, “A

* Preached by Dr. Burrell on the 208th anniversary of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes,

book has fallen into the hands of the people—a book of brambles, and vipers in them.”

In France the Bible readers were called Huguenots from a word used in the nursery like Bogy, or Bugaboo. The name meant night-walkers, and its pertinency was due to the fact that when the day's work was over these simple people were wont to meet in retired places to read together the blessed Word of Life.

The story of the Huguenots covers about two centuries. It may, for convenience, be divided into three periods.

The first period begins with the accession of Francis I., in the year 1515. At the outset he was disposed to toleration, but was soon moved by papal argument to pledge himself to the extirpation of heresy.

A wool-carder of Meaux, named Jean Le Clerc, had come into possession of a New Testament. He became convinced, by reading this, of the sinfulness of image-worship and of the confessional. He tore down a papal bull on indulgences from the door of the parish church and posted instead a figure of the pope as Antichrist. He was taken to Paris and condemned for heresy. He was scourged through the streets and branded on the forehead with the *fleur-de-lis*. He was then released, only to be rearrested for having a Bible in his possession. His right hand was cut off at the wrist, his arms were broken, the eyes that had looked upon the forbidden page were gouged out; then he was taken to the stake: as the fagots were kindled his head was encircled with red-hot iron. A voice in the company was heard to say, “Stand firm, O witness for the truth!” It was his mother's voice; and while the fervid metal was eating its way to the brain he calmly repeated, “Glory to the Father, and to the Son,

and to the Holy Ghost. Amen;" then his voice was stifled. This was the proto-martyr of the Reformation in France.

The witnesses came in quick succession, by scores and hundreds, to the axe and the fagot, or to be broken on the wheel. There were bonfires of Bibles, kindled by order of the Sorbonne, in public places. The works of the reformers were committed to the flames. The time would fail me to tell of those who at this period "had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, of bonds and imprisonment; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy."

The Huguenots contented themselves with a warfare of placards, called *Pasquinades*, which were posted by night. One of them may be given by way of illustration. It was affixed to the door of the king's bedchamber:

"I invoke heaven and earth in testimony of the truth against that proud and impious papal *Mass*, which (unless it be overthrown) is destined to destroy France. For therein is the Lord blasphemed. There is no sacrifice but One, namely, Jesus Christ, who was offered once for all. But, behold, our land is flooded with wretched priests who proclaim that Jesus Christ must be uplifted and sacrificed over and over again, even while in their vespers they chant that he is a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. Wherefore they themselves, in spite of themselves, do admit that the pope and all his brood of cardinals and canting priests, with all who consent thereto, are false prophets, apostates, damnable deceivers, wolves in sheep's clothing, execrable liars and blasphemers, murderers of souls, renouncers of Jesus Christ, and robbers of the honor of God. I demand of them whether the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was perfect or

not ; if imperfect, why do they deceive the people? if perfect, why do they repeat it? Come forward, ye blasphemers, and answer if ye can."

The king and the priesthood were beside themselves with fury. The *Pasquinades* appeared in the most preposterous places. At length an edict was issued prohibiting this use of the printing-press on penalty of death. It was too late, quite too late ; as well might a cricket have chirped against the roll of heaven's thunder.

Then came the *Estrapades*, a refinement of cruelty which seems incredible in these enlightened days. In the Place before the Cathedral of Notre Dame the unfortunates who persisted in reading the Scriptures, or who were suspected of preparing the placards, were suspended by chains over slow fires. In their last anguish they supported one another with Scriptural promises and exhortations to fidelity. This led to further atrocities. The tongues of the victims were now torn out before the flames were kindled. God is a sure paymaster. The hour of retribution drew nigh. The perpetrators of these horrors had sown the wind ; they were destined to reap the whirlwind.

The second period, which may be characterized as the period of Massacre, begins with the accession of Charles IX. in the year 1559. He was a mere boy, and the government was in the hands of his mother, Catharine de' Medici, in alliance with the Guises. At this time the Bible readers had so multiplied, despite their persecutions, that Cardinal de St. Croix said, "France is half Huguenot." The Admiral Coligny wrote to the queen mother, "We have more than two thousand churches and four hundred thousand men able to bear arms." It was apparent that this "heresy" could not be extirpated by picking off the heretics

one by one. They must be slain *en masse*, by groups and congregations.

The Duke of Guise, leading his armed followers through the village of Vassy, heard the singing of hymns. A party of Huguenots were gathered in a barn for divine service. The rude sanctuary was invested by the duke's men at arms; the signal was given, and for an hour they hacked and stabbed the unresisting worshippers. There upon the floor lay sixty dead and two hundred more wrestling with death. Along rode the duke towards Paris, where, the news having gone before him, he was welcomed by the clergy with *Te Deums* and hailed as the deliverer of France.

Then Catharine de' Medici and the Duke of Alva met on the borders of Spain. It was a significant conference. The world was divided between them for the destruction of heresy. Alva took the Netherlands and commenced that fierce campaign of blood and fire in which the Beggars of Holland made themselves immortal as champions of the faith. France was assigned to Catharine. She hastened to her task. The king was entreated day and night to sign the death sentence of the Huguenots. At last, wearied by importunity, he signed, saying, "Let the work be done so thoroughly that no Huguenot shall survive to shake his finger at me." At dead of night, the awful night of August 24, 1572, the bell of St. Germain sounded, and the royal guards, wearing white stars and crosses on their hats, were let loose upon the defenceless people. The Duke of Guise himself murdered the aged Coligny, whom all France revered as a noble and spotless man. The king, from one of the galleries of the Louvre, aimed his arquebus at the panic-stricken crowd. The tiger was let loose at daybreak; the streets were filled with mu-

tilated corpses; the gutters ran red. Three days the massacre continued, not in Paris alone but in many of the rural towns and villages. One hundred thousand of the best people of France were slain!

The news was brought to Rome; the bells rang cheerily, and cannon boomed from the castle of San Angelo. It is vain to deny the responsibility of his Holiness for this awful deed. What is written is written. On the wall of the Sistine Chapel was for many years a commemorative fresco, painted by the Pope's order, with the inscription, "Pontifex Colinii Necem Probat;" that is, "The Pope approves Coligny's murder." A medal was struck in commemoration of this event, copies of which are still extant, bearing the effigy of Pope Gregory and on the reverse a picture of the massacre—an angel with a cross in the left hand and a sword in the right, and underneath the words "*Ugonottorum Strages, 1572*"—"The Massacre of the Huguenots, 1572."

God is a sure paymaster. The time would surely come when the Romish church would rue this baptism of blood.

" God's mills grind slow
But they grind woe."

The last period of this eventful history begins with the accession of Henry IV., in the year 1598. Henry the Fourth was a Huguenot, and at once issued a manifesto permitting the reading of the Scriptures and the exercise of the individual conscience in the worship of God. The Pope protested. "A decree giving liberty of conscience," said he, "is the most accursed that could be made." For twelve blessed years the land had rest. Then Henry was assassinated and discord broke out. The Government fell into the hands of Marie de' Medici with the Cardinal Richelieu as her mighty ally. Ominous names! An attempt was made to destroy heresy by offering a price for the

conversion of each Huguenot. Failing in that the *Dragonades* were instituted. All the Huguenot ministers were doomed to immediate exile; no others were allowed to emigrate; the schools were closed; the Bible readers were ordered to recant or die. An order was issued for the destruction of the Huguenot churches. All children must now be baptized by the parish priest. The dying must receive priestly absolution, otherwise the body was removed by the common hangman and flung into the public sewer.

The people fled in multitudes. In vain were guards stationed along the seashore and borders; in vain did ships of war go cruising up and down. Those who were caught attempting to fly were sentenced to the galleys for life. Still the persecuted fled over the trackless wastes, and through the forests by unfrequented paths. They hid among the cargoes, in bales of goods and empty casks. They endured unspeakable hardships in their desire to flee from their Rome-cursed fatherland. A royal order was issued that the holds of vessels about to sail should be fumigated with deadly gases. Still they fled. It is estimated that during these *Dragonnades* not less than five hundred thousand of her thriftiest population were lost to France.

Then the death blow. On October 22, 1685, Louis XIV. signed the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. It was urged by the priests, who said, "The Huguenots are perished from the earth, why should the charter of their heresy be left as a dead letter upon the statute books?" The king had no alternative but to consent. In this deed he did penance for the shameless vices of his former life. The next day he married Madame de Maintenon. She was the price of his perfidy. Toll the bells! The long struggle is over. The *Dragonnades* have done their work.

What then? *God is a sure paymaster.* The wrongs inflicted on the Huguenots destroyed the supremacy of France. She was once the leading nation on earth. To-day her magnates, trembling at the lifted finger of the war lord of Germany, are hobnobbing with a captain of the Czar's navy. By the deportation of the Huguenots the industries of France were paralyzed. The looms of Lyons were abandoned; the hammer rested on the anvil. Too late the nation discovered the value of its thrifty middle class, its Third Estate.

Now began those ominous mutterings against the divine right of kings and the usurpation of a titled aristocracy which were consummated in the Reign of Terror. The mobs were soon clamoring for Marat and Robespierre. The pillars of the government were trembling in the grip of retribution. Louis XVI. must presently bow his head to the guillotine, and his last testimony, drowned by the beating of drums, would recall the silencing of the victims of the *Estrapades*. The fathers had eaten a sour grape and the children's teeth were set on edge.

But heaviest of all fell the blow of judgment upon the church that had instigated those bloody deeds. Ere long the shrines of Mary were violated. Ere long the people were bowing before a courtesan as the Goddess of Reason. Ere long the Corps Legislatif was ringing with the shout, "No God! No God!" The multitudes abandoned the churches and sought the counsels of Voltaire and Rousseau. If Romanism is struck with death in France to-day, it is not Protestantism but mad atheism that has done it. And indeed the Romish church is moribund in France. Could it be otherwise? Is God blind, or do the people so soon forget? Why should France pay homage to the scarlet woman, who for two long cen-

turies reddened her garments with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus?

But the loss of France was the gain of the whole world. The Huguenots who fled to Holland built up the magnificent industries of that country. Their names may be read to-day upon the shops of the Hague. Their trademark is on the potteries of Delft. Those who took refuge in Switzerland—weavers, glass-makers, artisans of every sort—laid the foundations of her prosperity. In England the armies that fought for civil and ecclesiastical freedom were largely recruited from the Huguenot refugees. Up to that time England had been a pastoral country; her wool had been shipped to France and Flanders for manufacture. All this was henceforth done at home. Manchester and the other great manufacturing centers were largely erected by Huguenot hands. We note in Germany the same result, and it was the very refinement of the poetry of retribution that many of the German officers in the Franco-Prussian war were of pure Huguenot blood. Thus the persecuted who fled under the *Dragonnades* were like those who were scattered abroad from the Holy City under the Pentecostal baptism: they went everywhere with gracious influence proclaiming the word of God.

After the lapse of two centuries now a strange thing happens. Under the ashes of the Huguenot church the fire begins to burn. It was a true word of the Master concerning his Church, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." "Kill them all," said Francis I., "lest a Huguenot shall live to shake his finger at me!" Never was so adroit and desperate an attempt at the destruction of a people. Yet, lo, after the lapse of these centuries the Huguenots live in many of the rural towns of France!

They, a feeble folk like the conies, are meeting together and reading the blessed Word, and stretching out their hands to God's people in earnest entreaty to "come over and help us." The Huguenots live! "The church is an anvil," said Beza to Henry of Navarre, "which has broken many hammers." Aye, He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh!

"Hammer away, ye rebel bands;
Your hammers break, God's anvil stands."

Out in the desert of Midian the watcher of Jethro's flocks saw an acacia bush aflame. As he looked he wondered. "I will turn aside," said he, "and see this great sight why the bush is not burnt." Burning, yet never burnt. Here is the miracle of history. The hills shall crumble, the earth shall be consumed with fervent heat, the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, but the truth, God's truth, abideth for ever! "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

THE LEPERS OF SAMARIA.

“Then they said one to another, we do not well; this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace.” 2 KINGS 7:9.

IT was a time of famine in Samaria. The sorrows of the people had reached the last extremity. The pastures were parched and brown; the cattle and herds went lowing and bleating for water in vain; no rain, no dew! The heavens above were like brass; the fleecy clouds that swept over did but mock the anguish of the people. The farmers of the country round about had been crowding into the city in the hope of finding sustenance. From the overflowing population a bitter cry of anguish went up. And yet a sorer experience awaited them.

The king of Syria, Ben-hadad, had for ten years been awaiting an opportunity to avenge an affront. The hour had come. With a vast army he marched out along the ancient road from Damascus, and at length, with waving banners, emerged into the vale of Shechem. He brought no enginery of war. His purpose was to reduce Samaria by the slow and horrible process of starvation. The army encamped about the city, enfolding it as in a serpent's toils. Who now shall paint the despair of beautiful doomed Samaria? Its people looked forth from tower and battlement, and while the pangs of hunger consumed them, they could hear in their enemy's camp the sounds of feasting and laughter. Their streets were filled with the unburied dead. An ass's head was sold

for fourscore pieces of silver. Their deepest sorrow was reached when at length it was rumored that a mother had slain her infant for food.

At this juncture a strange thing happened. In the open space between the walls of the city and the Syrian camp four lepers were wandering about in quest of food. Every man's hand was against them. They were perishing. What should they do? At twilight one of them said, "Why sit we here until we die? If we enter the city the famine is there; if we sit still we perish also. Let us go unto the host of the Syrians; if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die." No sooner said than done. As they drew near the Syrian camp they heard no sound; no clash of arms; no footfall of sentries walking to and fro. Silence—dead silence. What could it mean? They drew nearer, came within the lines, and, lo! the camp had been deserted, and in great haste; for the Lord had made the Syrians to hear the sound of chariots and horsemen, as of a mighty host, and they had said one to another, "The Hittites come from the north, or the Egyptians from the south!" And they fled in sudden panic.

The lepers cautiously approached one of the tents and entered. The camp table was spread with food. They eagerly fell to, and satisfied their hunger. Then, going about from tent to tent, they gathered up the vessels of silver and gold, the spoil of Damascus, and hid it away in the earth. Thus the night passed. The first rays of the morning fell upon them. Then one lifting his eyes beheld yonder the walls of starving Samaria. Shame and confusion fell upon him. "My brethren," he cried, "we do not well; this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace!"

There spoke the awakening spirit of a man. The world is given over to selfishness. "Each for himself" is the prevailing rule.

"Alas! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun."

A recent traveler tells of his visit to an oriental hospital. It was horrible to hear the patients, lying on their rude mattresses, mockingly reproach each other with their infirmities. One wasted by consumption jeered at his neighbor whose limbs were swollen with dropsy. One whose face was eaten away with cancer laughed hideously at another who was dying with lock-jaw. At length a delirious fever-patient sprang from his couch and ran about, tearing away the coverings from his companions and laying bare their ghastly miseries. This is the spirit of the world.

But into this hospital of the world came the Lord Jesus with his golden rule. "Love one another," said he. "Speak the sympathizing word; stretch forth the helpful hand; bear ye one another's burdens; whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." We are the followers of Jesus Christ. His business is our business. His spirit also should be ours.

There are three motives to beneficence. Let us begin with the lowest.

I. *Self-interest.* We seek our own salvation. This is chronologically the first of Christian motives, but logically the last. How shall we get salvation? It is completely done in one act of self-surrender. That being attended to, why should we continue to fret ourselves about it? Why shall we keep on singing,

“When I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies”?

The best “assurance” is found henceforth not in any working in ourselves, but in working outwardly for the salvation of those about us.

A traveller lost on the bleak western prairie felt himself yielding more and more to a drowsiness which meant certain death. He bravely resisted, struggled on, felt his eyelids closing down, his limbs growing numb, when suddenly he stumbled over something in the way. It was the body of a man. Dead? He stooped over him. The pulse still fluttered, the flesh was warm. He chafed him, gathered him up in his arms, and, seeing a light in the distance, struggled on with his burden toward it. He was weary, the perspiration stood upon his face, but he must hold out. It meant life or death. At length he staggered with his burden across the threshold of a farmhouse. Saved! Saved in saving the other man! Ah, there are multitudes who come up to heaven’s gate wearied in like service, and have an abundant salvation ministered unto them. They have lived in self-forgetful care of others. Think you the good Lord would let them suffer for that?

We speak of happiness as the highest good. But who is the happy man? Is it he who gets and hoards? Is it he who most pleases self? The things of this present time all perish with the using. Wealth slips like gold dust through one’s fingers. There are no pockets in our shrouds.

“That I kept, I lost;
That I gave, I have.”

The happiest man that ever lived was the One who most forgot himself, who ever thought of others. What is he

doing at Sychar? A woman is here athirst for the living water, and he has come through the scorching sun to give her the draught which alone quenches the soul's thirst. What is he doing at Bethesda? Here are the lame, the withered, the halt. He has come to heal them. What is he doing yonder at Gadara beyond the lake? A maniac is there dwelling among the tombs. He has come to dispossess him of the evil one. So he journeys hither and yon on errands of mercy, thinking of all but Jesus. And why does he now climb the hill with this weird burden upon him? He has assumed the world's sin and will bear its shame, its bondage, and its penalty, in his own body on the tree. Thus he empties himself, makes himself of no reputation, forgets himself for us. Let the mind which was in Christ Jesus be also in you.

II. *The Common Weal.* This is a higher motive than self-interest. The world's aphorism is, "Look out for number one." But the Christian spirit makes greater account of number two. It teaches us to be neighbor to every man.

A ship was out upon the open sea. The captain through his glass spied in the distance what seemed to be a floating hulk. Then he descried a signal of distress. The life-boat was manned and sent forth. The rescuers reached the hulk, climbed up, found sailors lying dead here and there upon its deck. Yonder, in the shelter of a torn sail, lay one in whom life still lingered. They lifted him and let him down gently into their boat. As they were about to row away he opened his eyes and struggled to speak. He could but faintly whisper. This was what he said: "Do n't go; there is another man!" They went back and found the other man. Oh, this is the best impulse of sanctified human nature—to rescue the other man!

It is said of Jesus that he had compassion upon the multitude. He saw them as sheep without a shepherd and pitied them. They were a-hungred. He bade them sit down in ranks upon the green sward. Then he multiplied the loaves and—supplied their need? No. He distributed the loaves among his disciples, and said, "Give *yé* them to eat." This injunction comes to us. If God has bestowed his rich blessing upon us, is it not a shameful thing to keep it to ourselves? It does not impoverish us to give nor enrich us to withhold. There is enough for all. Therefore, "to do good and to communicate forget not." Let the mind that was in Christ Jesus be also in us.

III. *The Divine Glory.* This is the highest motive of all. The chief end of man is to glorify God. In the Brahman religion the highest degree of virtue is *Apa-varga*, that is, "to be swallowed up in Brahm." The devotee sits all day long, indifferent to the world about him, lost in meditation. Ask him what he is doing. He will tell you that he is sinking his personality in the Ineffable One. There is beneath this pagan conception a glorious truth. The highest attainment possible to a human soul is to lose itself in God; not in any pantheistic surrender of personality, not in any subjective process of sentimental reflection, but in the complete blending of the human with the divine will, and an entire surrender of personal ambition to the divine purpose. This is to esteem God's glory above all individual good, and herein lies the chief end of man.

We are to glorify God. But how? We cannot help him in the administration of universal affairs. We cannot assist him to roll the stars around their orbits. Nor will it glorify him merely to live in the perfunctory

discharge of duty. To pay one's debts and speak the truth and obey the civil law is better than the contrary; but the Lord pity the man who is no better than the law makes him!

God is doing a great work. He is delivering this world from sin. It has been going on for centuries. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." To this work all earnest men are called. In this we are to be "laborers together with God." And herein shall we glorify him. To make the world better, to sweeten and brighten the lives of those about us, is to glorify him.

It has pleased God to identify himself with the interests of the poor and suffering. A Russian legend tells of a poor serf who on a bitter night passed a soldier on guard whose teeth were chattering with cold. "Man," said he, "you shiver, you are freezing: take my coat," and therewith he threw his greatcoat upon the shoulders of the sentry and passed on. Long after, the serf came up to heaven's gate. He looked to see his Lord clad in royal garb. He found him at last, but not robed in splendid garments as he had expected. "Master," he said, "thou wearest my coat." "Aye," said Jesus, "I have worn it ever since thou gavest it me that cold night." There is truth in this legend; for did not the Master himself say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me?"

We have a warm place in our hearts for the leper of Samaria who led his brethren towards the gates of the starving city. They called to the porter, "The Syrians have fled; there is food enough and to spare." The porter called to the watchman within. A little later the people came crowding through the gates. Men nigh to

famishing; mothers with their pale-faced children in their arms. Oh, that was a great day for Samaria! Were they happy, think you, who were thus delivered from death? Were they happy to be saved from the unspeakable pains of starvation? But off on yonder hillside stood four men, their fingers upon their lips, crying, "Unclean! Unclean!" who dared not mingle with the multitude. Wretched outcasts!—yet in all Samaria none were happier than they. For deep down in their hearts they felt the profoundest of all pleasures, the "generous pleasure of a kindly deed."

The Lord has done great things for us. We have the Bible—the dear old-fashioned book. Oh, let us give its glorious truth to the world that famishes for the want of it! We have the good news of salvation. The light of the cross streams over us. Let us run with the message to those who are still in the shadow of death. The hope of heaven is ours. The call to the marriage supper falls upon our ears. Up yonder in our Father's house there is plenty and to spare. Go ye, beloved! Go out into the highways and hedges. Go down into the slums. Go—which is often harder—to your friends and neighbors. Tell them that the siege is lifted. Tell them that the drought is passed and the dew and rain are falling down from heaven. Oh, let us not come alone to the King's gate! The grapes and the pomegranates, the sacramental bread and wine upon the heavenly tables, are enough for all. Let us bring others with us to share the delights of the marriage supper of the Lamb.

NO EXCUSE FOR UNBELIEF.

“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” LUKE 16:31.

IN one of the cities of Cesarea-Philippi there were six brothers, well-to-do gentlemen—eminently respectable men. They attended to their own affairs. They paid their debts, obeyed the laws, and dealt justly with their fellow-men. This was the sum total of duty as they apprehended it. As to spiritual things they were non-committal. They said, “You tell us about God and immortality and righteousness and judgment to come. There may be something in these things, but we have no means of knowing it. There are some things that we can see and handle with our hands. We are living in a world of actual toil and struggle. Things that pertain to this present world are real and tangible; they lie within the reach of our finger tips. As to things invisible we know nothing; let them pass.” So they took no interest in God or religion, but lived purely sordid lives. That was the worst that could be said about them. They were not thieves, murderers, or adulterers, but just worldlings, that was all.

In course of time it happened that one of these brothers died—died, and “went to his own place.” Of course he went to his own place. At death every one goes to his own place. That is, to the place for which his manner of life has fitted him. So it is written, “In hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment.” His tongue was parched with an unquenchable thirst—a spiritual thirst; a vain long-

ing for possibilities forever gone by. He suffered like Tantalus, who stood to his lips in clear water, which receded whenever he sought to drink. The glories of heaven were in view, but he was shut out. He had chosen to turn his back on spiritual verities and now he was exiled from God. And "there was a great gulf fixed"—an eternal, bridgeless gulf. By reason of the fixity of his character he could never cross it. The "eternal hope" is a delusion and a snare; there is neither Scripture nor reason for it. Death had sealed the rich man's choice. He was in his own place. He had no part in heaven, no fitness for it.

In his interview with Abraham, of which Jesus tells, this lost man makes a curious request: "I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldst send and admonish my five brethren, lest they also come into this place." Here is an implication that he, himself, had not been fairly treated. Had he known the dreadful outcome he would never have passed his life in the pursuit of sordid things. He would have his brothers warned in time. The reply is: "It would be in vain. They have Moses and the prophets; if they hear not them neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." For an angel to bear a message of warning or of invitation to those five busy worldlings would be indeed love's labor lost. Did they not reject the supernatural? Would they not have pronounced the angelic visit an imposture, an hallucination? Nor was there any common vocabulary by which this angel could have communicated with them. How difficult it is to express a spiritual fact in carnal terminology. Our Lord himself found it no easy matter. He defined God as a Spirit; but what is spirit? He could but speak of heaven as a house of many mansions, our eyes are so heavy, our ears so dull to spiritual things. And what

indeed could a celestial messenger say to these men? "Your brother is in hell and Lazarus in the realms of endless joy." Would they have believed that, think you? Would they not have said, "What? Our respected brother Dives lost, and Lazarus, that miserable beggar, in heaven? Nay, we believe not a word of it."

Here is our proposition. *There is no excuse for unbelief.* Every man has a fair chance. The evidence is sufficient. If we believe not Moses and the prophets there is nothing in heaven or in earth that could convince us.

I. Here is a reference to *Moses and the prophets in the Book.* The Jews were accustomed to characterize the Scriptures in that way. "Moses and the prophets" meant the Old Testament, which comprised the Scriptures of those days. In them they had a sufficient rule of faith and practice, a setting forth of all the important truths touching the endless life.

It was an imposing procession that passed before them, clothed in priestly and prophetic garb. There was Moses bearing the Tables of the Law and chanting his psalm of eternity, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." Then came a ruddy youth, his locks glistening with the dews of the morning, harp in hand, singing, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." Then a seer with eyes aflame foretelling the advent of the Mighty One: "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and call his name Immanuel, that is, God with us. He shall be wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, and by his stripes we shall be healed."

But we have more. If the light of Israel was deemed sufficient, how much more the glorious light of these days. The New Testament is ours. Not only Moses and the prophets walk before us, but the sons of the Evangel. Here are Matthew and Mark and Luke telling the old, old story of the manger, of the cross, and of the open sepulchre, with life and immortality brought to light. Here is the man of rock uttering his good confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Here is the little Jew of Tarsus hurling forth his challenge, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died." Here is the aged dreamer telling us of heaven's gates wide open, and closing the Book with a voice of universal invitation: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The Book is closed and sealed with a *Finis*. Moses and the prophets, the apostles and the evangelists all have spoken. The sublime verities have been emphasized; the great problems have been cleared up. If we hear them not, what shall persuade us?

We live in the age of the open Bible. Its leaves are scattered abroad like the falling leaves of the tree of life. When Tyndale was at Oxford he came upon a copy of the Erasmus Bible. A great resolution was formed within him. "If God spare my life," said he, "I will put this book into our vernacular ere many years; I will cause that the husbandman shall sing the songs of Zion as he follows his plow; that the weaver at his loom shall utter forth the exceeding great and precious promises while he flings the shuttle. Aye, the time shall presently

come when Turks and pagans shall read the gracious truth." That time has come. The word is scattered abroad. The poorest and humblest may search it. This is enough; God is absolved. If we perish it is not his fault. What more could he have done for his vineyard that he hath not done in it?

II. A further reference is made to *Moses and the prophets in history*. The Israelites saw the great law-giver, on that awful night of Nisan 14th, leading forth a vast rabble of two million souls into the wilderness. They saw his lifted rod divide the waters of the sea, and heard the song of Miriam and her daughters upon the further shore, "Sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." They saw that multitude halt under the shadow of Sinai to receive the decalogue which was to be the constitution of the theocratic nation, and followed them during the long journey through the wilderness, until at length, by a continuous miracle of special providence, they entered the promised land. In that little strip of territory, in a remote and inconspicuous province of the world, for centuries the Lord had watched over this people with a peculiar care and protected them. From the battle-field of Esdraelon had fallen upon their ears the cry, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" The sun had stood still on Ajalon and the moon over the heights of Gibeon in their behalf. "O my soul," rang out the voice of Deborah, "thou hast trodden down strength! So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord; but let them that love thee be as the sun going forth in his strength." Those fifteen centuries of glorious providence under the administration of Moses and the prophets were before them. The irrefutable testimony of his-

tory was theirs. Had they not abundant reason to believe in the power and goodness of the living God?

But in our case the evidence is incomparably stronger. God has been working, not in Palestine alone, but in the wide world. The horizons have been pushed back and we have seen Moses and the prophets re-inforced by the noble army of apostles and martyrs, and the goodly fellowship of evangelists bearing the oracles of truth and righteousness through all lands and over all seas. It was a little band of eleven men who came down out of the upper chamber to universal conquest. At Olivet they were one hundred and twenty in number when they saw the Lord ascending through the clouds that opened to receive him. On the day of Pentecost about three thousand were added unto their number. At the end of the first century there were half a million; at the end of the fifth century there were one hundred millions, and at the end of the eighteenth century there were two hundred millions, and now, with a decade of the nineteenth century still to spare, there are above four hundred millions of people who glory in the gospel of Christ. The Lord has been doing great things. The Christian era is a long record of miracles. Moses and the prophets, the apostles and evangelists, have been working wonders in his name, and still the royal standards onward go.

In prophecy the gospel of the great propaganda is likened to the waters of the sea. The ocean washes every shore. It rolls through all the bays and estuaries, pushes its way along the rivers, and creeps up the rippling brooks to the very springs upon the mountain tops. It floats in the fleecy clouds above us; it rises in vapors that hang about our doorways. It is diffusive, omni-

present, irresistible. So is the glorious gospel of the blessed God. There is nothing hid from the power thereof. The time is coming when its glory shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

To a thoughtful mind this voice of history is conclusive. If Moses and the prophets in the story of the Exodus and in the chronicles of the little land that flowed with milk and honey were sufficient for Israel, what tremendous logic there is in the culminative triumph of our religion through these successive centuries. Hume and Gibbon were not insensible to this argument, and, unbelievers as they were, they confessed the presence of an inexplicable power in the propagation of the religion of the true God.

III. We note here a further reference to the truth as represented by *Moses and the prophets in personal experience*. When Pascal was wearied with his investigation of external evidences, which at best could establish only a probability of truth in no wise amounting to mathematical certainty, he submitted the doctrine to his own inward nature, and, as he says, "found there a response so prompt and eager that he could no more doubt than he could doubt his own existence." As time passed on this evidence became more and more assuring, until, when he lay dying, Pascal was moved to say, "The truth is clear as day."

There is indeed a quick response within us to the address of truth. The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord. A boy sick in the hospital, unconscious to all other impressions, will open his eyes and smile under his mother's touch. In like manner the soul is thrilled, convicted, satisfied, when God addresses himself, through conscience, to the inner man.

The proof furnished in our personal experience is twofold.

1. *The truth has power to save.* There is many a man to whom theology is an unknown term who knows the truth of the gospel by reason of its power to save; whose entire creed is in his grateful song, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his trouble." They tell of a king in the olden time who, being sick unto death and finding all remedies unavailing, bade his servants lay him down upon an effigy of the cross. No sooner did his wasted frame touch it than, quickened with new life, he cried, "It lifts me up! It lifts me up!" So many a sin-sick soul has hailed with joy the healing cross of Jesus, the Bearer of the world's sin, and your sin and mine.

2. The truth not only saves; it edifies as well. The word "edification" means "temple-building." The truth is supremely helpful in the building of character. It enables us to rend the fetters of vicious habits.

"It breaks the power of reigning sin
And sets the prisoner free."

It fixes our eyes upon the Ideal Man and bids us be ever more like him. Its injunction is "Add." "Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

This evidence of personal experience we hold in common with the children of Israel. The law, as set forth by

Moses at Sinai and by the greater than Moses on the mountain in Galilee—the gospel, as foretold in the prophets and fulfilled in the Evangel—have been saving and gladdening and upbuilding and energizing men from the beginning until now.

Thus we conclude there is no excuse for unbelief. There is proof enough of the reality of the great doctrines which centre in Christ. It is the will, not the reason, that rejects them. “O Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you,” lamented the Master, “as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not.” We speak of our skepticism as “honest doubt,” but therein do we protest too much. To deny the shining of the sun at high noon is not “honest doubt;” it is fatuity. O ye of little faith, wherefore do ye doubt? Moses and the prophets set forth the truth with convincing power. The Book, all History, and the voice of Conscience and Experience speak with convincing power. Be ye not faithless, therefore, but believing.

We flatter ourselves that we wait for further evidence. Nay, rather we need a changed heart—a heart made willing to receive the truth. Stronger evidence will never be forthcoming. “Say not, ‘Who shall ascend into heaven?’ (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, ‘Who shall descend into the deep?’ (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) For lo, the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; to wit, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

THE CHURCH AND THE SALOON.

“For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial?” 2 Cor. 6:14, 15.

THE temperance reform in this country is not a century old. In the year 1825 the use of distilled spirits had reached the enormous amount of seven and one-half gallons *per capita*. The thinking people were alarmed. Something must be done. The starting point was total abstinence on the part of the disciples of Christ. The term “moral suasion” came into use. As yet there was no suggestion of legal repression of the traffic in intoxicating drink. The progress of temperance reform since those days is obvious from the fact that the use of distilled spirits is now less than two gallons *per capita*. The introduction of malt liquors must be taken into the account. Nevertheless we have reason to thank God and take courage.

At this moment the question touches the relation of the church to the saloon. Here are two tremendous forces: one for evil, the other for good.

I. As to the Church. What is it? The word is *ekklesia*; that is, “called out.” The church is an association of persons called out of the world to perform a definite service for God.

1. It is not a holy club. There are those who suppose the church to be a select company of saints who withdraw their garments as they pass, saying, “Stand aside, for I

am holier than thou." Not so; the members of Christ's church are sinners—sinners saved by grace.

2. It is not a social coterie. True, the best people are here, the real *aristoi*; not esteeming themselves to be good, but desiring to be so. It is a glorious fellowship. It is an inestimable privilege to be admitted to it. But the social advantages of the church are merely incidental to its prime purpose.

3. It is not a company of truth seekers. We are not seeking truth; we have found it. The Bible contains the sum and substance of all truth respecting the spiritual life. To understand the Bible is the end of our desire. Our creeds are valueless save as they are faithful statements of the contents of Holy Writ.

4. It is not an ethical society. We are not casting about for a system of morals. Our moral code is in the Bible. Our ambition is to adjust our lives to that as the summary of duty.

5. The church is a great living organism through which God is working for the tearing down of evil and the building up of truth and righteousness on earth. The emblem of our service is the sword and trowel. What is the sword for? To make war on iniquity. The followers of Christ are not at liberty to enter into complicity with any form of ill-doing whatsoever. Cut it down; overthrow it! Our Master came into the world to destroy the works of the devil, and we are to follow him. What is the trowel for? To build up all forms of goodness on earth; to lay grace upon grace, as the mason lays stone upon stone, until our world shall be a temple fit for the Holy Spirit to dwell in. Thus with sword and trowel we clear the way and rear the fabric of the kingdom of God.

II. As to the saloon. What is it? A definition

must be an indictment. It is the focal expression of almost everything evil. It is *an enemy of man*. It bloats his visage, reddens his eyes, seethes his flesh, and makes a cesspool and common sewer of the body which was intended to be a temple of the living God. It corrupts his heart, enfeebles his will, paralyzes his conscience, and sends him reeling out into the darkness, from which a voice returns, "No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God." It is the *enemy of the home*. It puts out the fire upon the hearth; it empties the barrel and the cruse; it transforms the natural protector of the family into a fiend incarnate, clothes the wife in rags, and dooms the innocent children to suffering and shame. It is the worst *enemy of the State*. On last election day I took occasion to make the round of the polling-places in the lower part of New York city. I saw scores of sovereign citizens staggering to the ballot-box. The saloons were open and thronged to the doors. Here is the Gibraltar of evil politics. Here the repeaters and thugs congregate. Here is the market of the purchasable vote. Here is the last ditch of misrule. We talk of municipal reform; there can be no municipal reform until we are prepared to deal summarily with the dram-shop, which is the most portentous menace of civil government. If our republic shall ever join the long procession of nations whose ruins line the path of history it will be under the intolerable burden of those evils which are attributable to intoxicating drink. The saloon is, furthermore, the direst *enemy of the church*. It builds up an impassable wall between the soul and Calvary; it engenders a bitter hatred for the things that are true and lovely and of good report; it bars the way to the sanctuary and heaven like the red dragon that guarded the gates of the Hesperides.

Are there witnesses to verify this indictment? Aye, thousands of them reeling about our streets. See them issuing from the dram-shop; mark their flushed faces; their shuffling gait; see them as they pass by hiccoughing down to death. Here are young men, honest toilers, men of the learned professions, all sorts and conditions of men; every one of them made in the divine likeness; every one of them hastening towards eternity. What wreck and ruin have here been wrought! It is related that once in a certain town in Kentucky the grandson of the statesman Henry Clay lay dying of a wound received in a drunken brawl, while at the same time the grandson of John J. Crittenden was wrestling with *delirium tremens*, and the grandson of Patrick Henry was serving out a term of imprisonment for attempted murder—the result likewise of drink.

Are more witnesses needed? *Let the wives and children* of this drunken multitude pass by. Oh, these sad-eyed, pale-faced women! God pity the drunkard's wife, and his little children, ill-clothed and hungry, shrinking from the pointed finger and the taunt, "A drunkard's child." There are many millions of money invested in the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors, but if a bill for damages were made out against the dram-shop for the havoc it has wrought among these women and little ones, all those millions would be exhausted over and over again to pay it.

More witnesses still? Let us stand by the doorway of one of our multitudinous dives and *hear the laughter of lost womanhood*. The evils which are wrought in this place of infamy are scarcely to be spoken of in this presence. But inmates and patrons alike are devotees of Bacchus. We shall never reach the social evil until we

hurl the thunderbolts of outraged sentiment against the dram-shop. Out of the doorway of this den of infamy comes a painted thing "whose feet take hold on hell." On either side she is supported by the semblance of a man: on this side the gambler, on that the dram-seller. Hither they come—the three horrors of our civilization. Now abide these three, Gambling, Licentiousness and Inebriety; and the greatest of these is Inebriety, for it stands behind all.

Is more evidence needed? *Let us pass through the corridors of our prisons.* Here are thieves, murderers, and wrong-doers of every sort. Chief Justice Coleridge says more than eighty per cent. of all these commitments are due to strong drink. A while ago a man came from the saloon to his home and, though ordinarily the kindest of husbands, now, beside himself with drink, struck down the wife of his bosom while his children stood sobbing and cowering before him. The screams of his wife brought the police, but too late. He was dragged to prison: the next morning he awoke and looked about him. "Where am I?" he asked of the guard at the grating. "In jail." "In jail! What for?" "Murder." A moment of silent horror, and then he asked, "Does my wife know?" "It was your wife you killed." He fell in a swoon. The constable who arrested that man was owner of the saloon that had nerved him for the bloody deed; the judge who sentenced him had voted to license it; and the jailer who turned the key upon him was a partner in the concern. Is it not a dreadful thing that this should be permitted to go on? Put one of our daily newspapers in evidence; cast your eye over the police reports. What is it that nerves men for deeds of shame and violence? There are criminals of many sorts and degrees, but the rum-

seller is the criminal of all criminals ; for it is scarcely beyond the bounds of simple fact to say that he is the maker of them all.

Still further. *Let us visit our insane asylums.* See these poor demented creatures, driveling idiots, raving madmen. It was long ago that a wise student of human nature exclaimed, " Alas, that men should put an enemy into their mouths to steal away their brains ! " It is stated that seventy per cent. of the inmates of our lunatic asylums have dethroned their reason by inebriety or else are paying by inheritance the penalty of parental indulgence.

Or *pass through our poorhouses.* Many of the paupers are old before their time ; watery-eyed and decrepit through drink. The vast majority, however, are women and children ; the wives and offspring of inebriates. The majority of our workingmen are accustomed to squander their surplus earnings in drink, and at death they leave their families penniless and helpless. What then ? Over the hills to the poorhouse !

Or *go through the potter's field.* Oh, what tragedies of pain and sorrow lie hidden under these mounds ! Here are men who struggled vainly in the grip of habit and died in drunken frenzy ; here are wives whose life was starved and beaten out of them until they were laid out for their burial in borrowed shrouds ; here are little children whose fathers were so impoverished by drink that not enough was left to purchase a meagre four feet of earth to lay them in. One of these days the trumpet will sound and the dead will come forth ; out of the potter's fields of the earth will arise a multitude that no man can number, who will point to the rum-seller, and with their flaming eyes and indignant appeals will scourge him

away from heaven's gate to his own place. For, if "no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom," how shall the drunkard-maker be permitted a place in the fellowship of saints and the presence of God?

III. Now as to *the relation of the church to the saloon*. We have seen that the church is the appointed organism through which God is building up truth and goodness on earth. We have seen that the saloon is the practical expression of nearly all that is iniquitous among men. How shall the two stand in relation to each other? Or what in these premises is the church to do?

1. *It can choose to do nothing*. It can supinely fold its hands and say, "The saloon has come to stay." God save us from that cowardly sophism! Suppose the saloon has come to stay; does that afford us reason for entering into complicity with it? The practice of idolatry has come to stay; theft has come to stay; murder has come to stay; adultery has come to stay; but shall we on that account propose a revision or restatement of the decalogue? Shall we forbear to oppose ourselves against those entrenched evils which God hates and his people are required to hate as well? Our Lord Jesus came into the world "to destroy the works of the devil," not to mourn because of their prevalence, nor to make compromises with them. We are to follow Him. Look to your marching orders! The time will come when, in the clear revealing of infinite justice, it will be seen that no evil thing had really "come to stay." The dram-shop with all other kindred iniquities will continue only until God's people shall become co-laborers with him in a united effort to overthrow it.

2. *The church may sanction the saloon*—that is, license it. The word license is from the Latin *licet*, which in the

original is an impersonal verb meaning "it is permitted"; but brought over into the English tongue it becomes intensely personal and means "I permit it." And that is the meaning of a vote for license—"I permit it." What is it that we permit? The dram-shop is authorized to do what?

"Licensed to make the strong man weak,
 Licensed to lay the strong man low;
 Licensed the wife's fond heart to break,
 And make the children's tears to flow.

"Licensed to do thy neighbor harm,
 Licensed to kindle hate and strife;
 Licensed to nerve the robber's arm,
 Licensed to whet the murderer's knife.

"Licensed thy neighbor's purse to drain,
 And rob him of his very best;
 Licensed to heat his feverish brain,
 Till madness crown thy work at last.

"Licensed, like spider for a fly,
 To spread thy nets for man, thy prey;
 To mock his struggles, suck him dry,
 Then cast the shattered hulk away.

"Licensed, where peace and quiet dwell
 To bring disease, and want, and woe;
 Licensed to make this world a hell,
 And fit man for a hell below."

3. *The church may undertake to sanctify the dram-shop*—that is, throw the cloak of ecclesiastical help and comfort over it. This is the last proposition which, in certain ecclesiastical quarters, finds favor. It is incredible that so preposterous a thing should be seriously proposed. The saloon is totally bad; it has done evil and only evil all the days of its life. If the roofs were lifted in this city at this moment we should see scores of men,

brutalized by drink, with their arms lifted beating their poor wives and wailing children; men who have made their homes wretched and robbed the lives of those whom God and nature alike have obliged them to protect, of the last remnant of joy and peace. It is now seriously proposed to make comfortable quarters for those drunken brutes: to strew the floor of the dram-shop with fresh sawdust, hang elevating pictures on the walls, and put pure liquors on the shelves. In God's name, if the church has aught of treasure or of sympathy to spare, let it be lavished on the drunkard's victims, on his poor wife and children, and let the brute shift for himself.

Are we, then, to do nothing for the drunkard? Oh, yes; but surely not in such a manner as to encourage him in his bestial vice. We may help him by legislating in his favor, by using all the powers of holy persuasion, and, above all and before all, by personal example in the matter of abstinence. "I have n't the heart," said a minister recently, "to deny the poor man his beer, while I lunch with my Bishop at my club." What then? One of two inferences should follow. Either let me provide comfortable quarters where the poor man may drink, or else (and this is the mind of the self-denying Christ) let me stop drinking with my Bishop at the club. If wine make my brother to offend, in the name of all that is good and gracious and Christlike, let me drink no wine while the world standeth.

4. There is but one other attitude which the church may assume; namely, it may antagonize the dram-shop to the uttermost. War to the knife and the knife to the hilt! No quarter! There are thirty continuous miles of saloons in the city of New York, and every red light that streams from them marks an open mouth of hell. What

can the church do but antagonize this thing? What shall ministers do but denounce it? If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, what shall the suffering people do? Let us befriend the drunkard and the drunkard's wife and children, and defend them from their foe. When the niece of Richelieu was assailed by a royal debauchee, the old cardinal, with holy indignation flaming from his eyes, stood for her protection :

“Look where she stands!

Around her form I draw the awful circle of our kingly church.

Step but a foot within the hallowed line

And on thy head—yea, though it wear a crown—

I'll hurl the curse of Rome!”

This should be the attitude of the church and of God's people towards the dram-shop, which is the enemy of all things pure and true and good. Let us not undertake to cleanse what has been proven in the nature of things to be essentially unclean. Let us not lay a blessing upon that which God has cursed. We must needs do our best and uttermost to rescue the dram-seller from the error of his ways; to break the chains of the inebriate and set him free; to heal the wounds of the poor and helpless whom the drink horror has stricken down. But as to that unmitigated evil—the dram-shop—we can offer naught but bitterest enmity. The vow of Cato, “*Carthago delenda est*,” must be ours. No quarter to the dram-shop! The thing must die, because it is accursed of God.

HOBAB OF AKABA ;

OR, WHY SHOULD I BE A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH ?

“And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel. And he said unto him, I will not go; I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred. And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes. And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.”
Num. 10:29-32.

WE are accustomed to say, “I believe in the holy catholic Church,” and to sing, “I love thy Church, O God.” Are we able to give a reason for this spirit of devotion? Macaulay says that in the time of Charles II. there was one institution that the people prized more than the hereditary monarchy; to wit, the Establishment; and yet, while ready to quarrel or to die for it, they were unfamiliar with its creed and oblivious of its moral obligations. Such unreasoning attachment to an institution is worth but little. We should be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason for the faith that is in us.

The Israelites had been encamped at the foot of Mt. Sinai for about a year. One morning in June, B. C. 1490, the mysterious cloud, which had been resting over the tabernacle, was seen lifted towards the sky. This meant that they were to journey on. An Arab sheik named

Hobab, from the Gulf of Akaba, a relative of Moses, who had been abiding in the camp, gave notice that he would now depart to his own land. The conference between him and Moses is given in detail :

And Moses said, "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, 'I will give it you:' come thou with us and we will do thee good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

And Hobab said, "I will not go; but I will depart unto my own land and to my kindred."

And Moses said, "Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes. And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee."

The argument which is here presented by Moses is valid to-day. There are many persons outside of the church who ought to be in it. There was Captain Miles Standish, of Plymouth colony, "an iron-nerved Puritan who could hew down forests and live on crumbs." He devoted himself to noble exploits in defence of the colonists and was nevertheless not himself a member of the Puritan fellowship. So here and there a devoted Christian is found who is loyal to the landmarks of scriptural faith and doctrine, a generous supporter of Christian enterprises, but outside the visible communion of Christ. This ought not to be. The specious reasoning which will excuse the conduct of such persons would excuse others equally well; the outcome of which would be—no church at all. Let us now consider the arguments which were advanced by Moses in urging Hobab to fall in with the militant host of God.

I. *The Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.* The church is a divine institution. It is the great living organism through which God is working for the deliverance of the world from sin.

The church as divinely constituted is characterized as follows: 1. *It is founded upon the living Christ.* As it is written, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." 2. *Its symbol is the Bible,* in which the people of the church find their infallible rule of faith and practice. No creed is of value except as it sets forth the doctrines of Holy Writ. No ethical system can be received which is not wholly derived from the Scriptures as the word of God. 3. *The two sacraments.* These furnish the cohesive force by which the church is held together. The two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are the sole remnant of the old ceremonial law. In simplest form they cover substantially the whole of the Levitical economy: all purifications are set forth in Baptism; all sacrifices are set forth in the Lord's Supper. 4. *The propaganda.* The chief end of the church is to propagate the gospel until "the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea."

The church thus founded and ordered has been kept by a special providence through all these ages. All ecclesiastical history might be briefly written in three chapters: 1. *It opens with the call of Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees.* The Lord appeared to him, saying, "I have appointed thee to keep the oracles, to cherish the true religion, to hold the doctrine of the promised Christ and hand it down to coming generations. Get thee, therefore, out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house unto a land that I will show

thee." So Abraham journeyed northward along the bank of the great river. Within the fluttering curtains of his tent were the destinies of the future church. Crossing the Euphrates towards the west he became the *Ibri*; literally, "the one who crosses over," the first of the Hebrews. Then, turning to the south, he passed on to Beersheba, where he settled with his household. His children were greatly multiplied. In course of time they went down into Egypt.

2. *The next chapter opens with the call of Moses.* Out in the desert of Midian the Lord said, "I have seen the affliction of my people and have heard their cry by reason of their task-masters; come now, therefore, and I will send thee to bring forth my people out of Egypt. Then the Exodus. The midnight wail at the death of the firstborn was the signal for the going forth of a multitude of not less than two millions of slaves. Out into the wilderness God led them with an outstretched arm; the waves of the sea parted before them; at Sinai they received their civil constitution in the moral and ceremonial law. The forty years of wandering, with many battles and unspeakable privations, bound them together into a homogeneous fellowship, so that at length, under the shattered walls of Jericho, they passed into the land of promise no longer a rabble of fugitive slaves, but a nation. The assignments of territory having been made in Palestine they settled down to various modes of life, but were held closely together by their religion centring in Jerusalem. A numerous body of priests cherished and set forth the great central doctrine of the promised Christ in a multitude of rites and ordinances, every one of which pointed toward the cross. A noble company of prophets taught the people out of the

Scriptures and bade them hope for the coming of Messiah. The shadows of religious declension gathered about the people, and as the long night of four hundred years set in—dividing the old from the new economy—the last of the prophetic line, Malachi, waving his torch, cried, “The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his beams!”

3. *The last chapter opens with the song of the angels,* “Glory to God in the highest; peace on earth, good-will among men!” The Christ has come! He preaches the great truths of the kingdom. He heals the sick and opens blind eyes. He sets his face steadfastly towards the cross; but ere he makes the great paschal offering he gathers about him a little company of disciples who form the nucleus of the Christian church. At Pentecost the baptism of fire and power falls upon them, and thence they are scattered abroad, preaching everywhere the unsearchable riches of Christ. God’s providence is round about them. From a mere handful their numbers are increased from century to century, until to-day there are not less than four hundred millions of people who bow the knee at the name of Jesus Christ. So God hath dealt wonderfully with Israel. The seed of Messianic truth which he placed in the hands of Abraham to be planted and nourished has grown into a glorious tree, under whose shadow the nations of the earth take shelter. God loves his church.

“Her walls before him stand,
Dear as the apple of his eye
And graven on his hand.”

II. *Come thou with us, for we will do thee good.* What are the personal advantages of being in the fellowship of

the church? 1. *The benefit of the avowal.* At the beginning of the Reformation there was a monk, Martin of Basle, who came to the knowledge of the truth but was reluctant to confess it. He wrote his confession on a leaf of parchment: "O most merciful Christ, I know that I can be saved only by the merit of thy blood. Holy Jesus, I acknowledge thy sufferings for me. I love thee! I love thee!" Then he removed a stone from the wall of his chamber and deposited his confession there. It was not discovered for more than a hundred years. In the meanwhile no one knew that Martin of Basle had found the riches of Christ. About the same time, however, there was another monk, Martin of Wittemberg, who, reading an old copy of the Scriptures, saw clearly the great truth of justification by faith. He said, "My Lord has confessed me before men; I will not shrink from confessing him before kings." On the door of the royal church he nailed his ninety-five theses. In the Diet at Worms he witnessed a noble confession. The world reveres the memory of Martin of Wittemberg; but as for Martin of Basle, who cares for him? The manly thing is to make confession of one's faith. The manly thing is to speak out. "Who now is on the Lord's side?" "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

2. *The benefit of the Eucharist.* Here we speak diffidently, for we are in the presence of a great mystery. The bread of the sacrament is bread, and the wine is nothing but wine; and yet there is a spiritual influence which is conveyed to the soul partaking of them. This simple repast is like the cake baken on the coals and the cruse of water of which the prophet partook and then proceeded in the strength of it forty days unto

the mount of God. It is indeed a feast of fat things and of wine upon the lees. In discerning the bruised body and poured-out blood of Jesus we enter in some mysterious manner into a peculiar communion with him. As it is written, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him."

3. *The benefit of mutual help.* The Hebrew word for strength is *chayil*, meaning "twisted." A three-fold cord is not easily broken. No man can stand alone. We need each other's prayers and sympathy. "Two are better than one, for if one fall the other will lift him up; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up."

III. *Thou mayest be to us instead of eyes.* The Israelites were facing the wilderness; Hobab knew the way. He could help them.

God is doing a great work. He is doing it through his church. A call goes forth to every earnest man to fall in with this fellowship and so become a laborer together with God. When Barak went out against Sisera's army the cry was heard from the heights, "To the help of the Lord! To the help of the Lord against the mighty!" And from every direction the tribes came flocking to his standard. But up in the north the village of Meroz, nestling among the hills, heeded not the call. When the battle was over, and Deborah went forth with the daughters of Israel to sing the triumph, there was one minor note:

"Curse ye Meroz, said the messenger of the LORD,
Curse ye its inhabitants
Because they came not to the help of the LORD,
To the help of the LORD against the mighty."

No right-thinking man, who loves truth and goodness

and who believes in Jesus Christ, can afford to be left out of the great work of the kingdom. If it be asked, "Cannot a man be saved outside of the fellowship of the church?" we answer, That is to put the question on the very lowest plane. No doubt there are many in the kingdom of heaven who were not associated with any body of believers here. But they lost the glorious opportunity of serving in the militant host.

"The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain;
His blood-red banner streams afar:
Who follows in His train?"

It is an exalted privilege to serve God in his great company. We are going to the land whereof the Lord hath said, "I will give it thee." Come thou with us, good friend. There are blessings by the way, but the milk and honey are beyond the wilderness. There is an inheritance in the heavenly Palestine for thee.

You may have part with us in the redemption of the world under the great Leader. There is a work awaiting your hand which no one can do as well as you. There is a place in the ranks vacant until you enlist and stand beneath the banner of the King of kings.

Come with us. This great company—the Church—is under God's special care and promise.

Come with us. We will do thee good.

Come with us. Thy life shall count for something yet in the great conflict against sin, as thou shalt find thy place in the embattled host.

THE GLORY OF THIS MYSTERY.

"I have received a dispensation to fulfil (*margin*, fully to preach) the word of God; even the mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Col. 1:25-27.

PAUL is giving an account of his work. All the industry which had marked his career as a zealot under the commission of the Sanhedrin, for the propagation of Judaism, he had brought over into the service of Christ. A new commission or dispensation had been given him, and in this case from God himself: to wit, to make known a great mystery, which had been hid from ages and from generations. This was the sum and substance of his preaching. It was the setting forth of a revelation or unveiling from God.

I. *The mystery* here referred to is declared to be "the hope of glory." Men have always believed that there is something beyond this present life. The spark of original divineness has never been extinguished within us. We came forth from God. He made us in his likeness; to face great problems; to have our hearts thrilled with noble aspirations; to see visions and to dream dreams; to commune with him. In our childhood we look off towards the interstellar spaces and wonder. There is something beyond. There are heights unattainable. By these very wonderings we are infinitely separated from the lower orders of life. We are all sensible that we have

met with a great loss; our birthright has gone from us.

“The moon doth with delight
 Look round her when the heavens are bare;
 The waters on a starry night
 Are beautiful and fair;
 The sunshine is a glorious birth;
 But yet I know, where'er I go,
 That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.”

Shall we ever recover our lost estate? Is there a glorious destiny in store for us? May we venture to hope? Our hopes are ever clouded in doubts and misgivings. If we need confirmation of them, we are met in nature by the fact that everything changes and passes away. The old mountains are crumbling; the stars of heaven are fading out; to everything there is an end. If we seek consolation from the King of Terrors we are appalled. From his bourne no traveller has ever returned. The lips of the dead have no word for us. There is no voice, nor answer, nor any that regardeth. If we ask philosophy to confirm our hopes, its strongest word is *if*, or *perhaps*. Plato felt himself to be floating on a raft upon a boundless sea; whence he came, or whither he went, he knew not. Socrates, with the cup of hemlock at his lips, ventured to hope; yet, whether this was the end, or something was to come after, he knew not.

II. *The mystery declared.* The Lord Jesus came into the world to verify this hope of glory. He preached it. He was ever speaking of the other world: the Father's house, whence he had come and whither he should go; the world of angels and perfected saints. All his discourse was in the realm of invisible realities. His life was like a ladder reaching up from the mountains and lost in the glory above. His great work on Calvary

was the casting up of a highway into that ineffable glory.

The hands that seemed so helpless when nailed upon the cross were paving the way into the kingdom of God, and his resurrection flung wide the doors. We stand at the open sepulchre, and as our eyes grow accustomed to the darkness it becomes a window opening upward through which we behold the splendors of the eternal home. In this vision, life and immortality are brought to light. The hope becomes a glorious fact. The hand of the death-angel sets the pulse beating wildly with a glorious expectancy.

“The world recedes; it disappears!
 Heaven opens on my eyes! my ears
 With sounds seraphic ring:
 Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!
 O grave! where is thy victory?
 O death! where is thy sting?”

III. *The mystery apprehended.* It is not enough that Christ should declare it. There is little advantage in objective truth. Gold in the mine makes no man rich. Water in the brook satisfies no man's thirst. The gold must be digged, coined, held in the hand. The water must be put to the lips. So truth must be appropriated. Luther thanked God for the personal pronouns. It is not Christ yonder who saves, but Christ made mine. The joy of salvation is in being able to say, “My Lord and my God.”

The key of this mystery, “the hope of glory,” is another mystery, “Christ in you.” There must needs be an anchor on every ship that sails, but when the storm rages an anchor on the deck is a vain thing; it must be let down, down, until its flukes take hold upon the rock, and then, when the anchor chain is all a-tremble, the ship

holds fast. So must we apprehend our Lord. The anchor-chain is faith; it holds us to the things which are within the veil.

But what does this mean,—“Christ in us”? Would that it were possible to tell. Who can explain the parable of the vine and its branches? Yet upon the realization of this mystery in our experience depends all the profitableness of life. As it is written, “He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.”

We may not explain the mystery, but we may realize it. The hope of glory may be ours. The clew to the labyrinth may be beyond comprehension, but what matter, if it leads us into light? The utility of a key does not depend upon a man’s acquaintance with the locksmith’s art. Christ in us is the truth that opens the door into glory.

We may know by certain infallible signs whether or no we have possessed ourselves of it.

1. *The first token is a willingness to hear.* The Master’s word is the believer’s court of last appeal. As Ulysses, sailing homeward, was about to pass the enchanted isles, he caused himself to be bound to the mast lest he should yield to the Sirens’ allurements. The voices rang in his ears; the white arms reached forth and beckoned; he heard, he saw, he struggled to be free, but his nobler purpose held him. So the Christian hears one voice above all others: it is the Lord’s behest; he is bound by the sternest sense of duty. The love of Christ constrains him.

2. *Another token is holiness.* The divine life in the believer is by a strange alchemy transmuted into this glorious result. A dew-drop, colorless and odorless, falls

upon a rose-bush ; it enters into the life of the rose. Pluck the flower, press it, and the dew-drop re-appears, and now it has beauty and fragrance. Explain to me the mystery of the dewdrop and I will explain the mystery of Christ dwelling in the believer's soul and ever revealing himself in the excellency of a holy life. The love of the Master makes us "coy and tender to offend." It is written, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin," *i. e.*, the trend of his entire life is toward truth and goodness. If betrayed into wandering, he returns. His life is like the magnetic needle, which, however it may tremble on its pivot, comes back to point northward. To have Christ dwelling in us is to have purged out sin.

3. Yet another token of this divine indwelling is *readiness to do and suffer aught for the Master's sake*. Self is more and more lost sight of. The divine within us crowds out all else. "Fire burns," said Bishop Bonner to Audley under sentence of death ; "fire burns and flesh cringes." "Aye," said Audley ; "but what is flesh now and what is life to a man who surrenders all to God? If I had as many lives as there are hairs upon my head, yet would I, without a moment's fear, lay all before Him."

4. The last token by which we verify our appropriation of the great mystery is *inward happiness*. Why should not that man rejoice whose destinies are inextricably blended with the unspeakable glory of the Son of God? For if we suffer with him we shall also be glorified together. If we enter into the fellowship of his death we shall also rise with him unto the endless life. There is no song like the song of salvation. "I am my Beloved's and he is mine ; his banner over me is love." When the new world appeared to the weary eyes of Columbus he led his sailors in the *Te Deum*. But what worlds of eternal re-

joicing are opened up to us in the hope of glory! All heaven is ours.

“To Thee all Angels cry aloud, the Heavens, and all the Powers therein.

To Thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry,

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth,

Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of Thy glory.

Thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

Thou sittest at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father.

Day by day we magnify Thee, and we worship Thy Name ever, world without end.

O Lord, let Thy mercy be upon us, as our trust is in Thee.”

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper* is the outward symbol of this mystical union of the believer and Christ. “I do as certainly feed and nourish your hungry and thirsty soul with My crucified body and shed blood to everlasting life as this bread is broken before your eyes and this cup is given to you, and as ye do eat and drink the same in remembrance of me,” is the Lord's word to each guest at the table. The elements of the sacrament are simple bread and wine; nor do we believe that they are changed in any mysterious way into veritable flesh and blood. Spiritually, however, our Lord does communicate himself to us in the partaking of this feast. It sets forth in outward symbol the fact that salvation is attained only by an actual receiving of the living Christ. As it is written, “Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood ye have no life in you.” Here is mystery again; but shall we therefore reject it? Life itself is a mystery. Where does life dwell? In the brain? In the heart? Or, as some of the ancients believed, in the pineal

* This sermon was delivered at the administration of the Lord's Supper.

gland? Nay. It dwells everywhere in us. It abides in brain and throbbing pulse and flashing eyes, and everywhere to the very finger tips. So does Christ dwell in us: possessing the will, the brain, the heart, and conscience; making the body itself his temple to dwell in.

When Wesley was dying he murmured over and over again, "Immanuel—God with us—This is the best of all—God with us." It is indeed a blessed truth that God should have bowed the heavens to come down and dwell among us. But that is not the best of all. The best is Christ in us, Christ in us—the hope of glory.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

THE CAREER OF A FAST YOUNG MAN.

“Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself a pillar, which is in the king’s dale; for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance: and he called the pillar after his own name; and it is called unto this day, Absalom’s place.” 2 Sam. 18:18.

THE French have a proverb, “To every bird its nest is fair,” and the Spaniards have another, “Every dog is a lion in his own kennel;” each of which is but another way of saying, “There is no place like home.” But it takes more than four walls and a roof to make a home. It takes love and patience and self-denial, and all the sisterhood of graces. If the roofs were lifted from the dwellings of this great city what desolations we should see! Here a frivolous mother is the evil spirit of the domestic circle; there it is a churlish Nabal who brings misery with him. Now the bane of the household is poverty, and again the wine cup. So was it in David’s golden house; there was every luxury, yet an unspeakable sorrow withal. The skeleton in the closet was a scapegrace son.

On the day when Absalom was born there was great rejoicing in the palace. How proud King David was, and what dreams the fond mother dreamed as she looked into that infant’s face! As time passed he grew into a splendid youth. Handsome? “In all Israel there was none so fair: from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet there was no blemish in him.” His hair, luxuriant and glossy, fell over his shoulders. Alas, it was destined to

cost him dearly yet! He was every inch a prince; brave as a lion, dashing, headstrong, a very Harry Hotspur. He was fond of display. He lived a luxurious life. He was ever ready for a revel. He gathered around him a coterie of the young blades of Jerusalem, and presently was known—for history goes around and around, and the things that happened then are happening now—as a fast young man.

The story of Absalom is briefly told. Its first chapter is sprinkled with blood. He was scarcely out of his teens before he had killed his brother Amnon and fled to Geshur, his mother's home, where he spent three impatient years in exile. Then by a ruse he secured permission to return; and presently his indulgent father, bending over him with pride glowing in his eyes, said, "Let bygones be bygones," and kissed him.

The next chapter in his life is full of dissipation. He set up an ostentatious establishment. Had you listened under his window you might have heard far into the night the rattling of dice and the clink of goblets. No boy in Jerusalem but knew Prince Absalom's prancing and curvetting horses. These were an Egyptian innovation and had been expressly forbidden. But Absalom followed the religion of his mother, who was a pagan princess, and God's precepts were nothing to him.

The next chapter is one of plotting and treachery. "He rose up early," it is written, "and betook himself to the gate." Oh, he was a clever youth. He met there such farmers and others as were in litigation, and asked, "How goes your case?" and when they answered, "Slowly," he replied with a sigh of solicitude, "Alas! My father is old; he means well, but he has no counsellors to speak of; if I were only in power you should see."

Thus did he sow dragons' teeth. He "stole the hearts of the people;" and treachery could no farther go. Better had he stolen the king's jewels or looted the royal exchequer than to have stolen away the people's hearts!

In the next chapter we see Absalom going out to Hebron to fulfil, as he told his father, a solemn vow. It must have pleased the king to know that his son was turning over a new leaf and setting his heart at last upon religious things. He was indeed but stealing the livery of the court of heaven to serve the devil in; for fast after him followed Ahithophel, the prime minister, and a company of congenial conspirators, chosen from the flower of the army. The plans had been well arranged: sentinels were stationed here and there along the way; a line of beacons had been laid upon the hills; the flames gave the signal from hill-top to hill-top; the procession set out for Jerusalem amid shouts and acclamations, "Absalom is king! Long live Absalom!" The tidings were brought to David at his golden house. He had no time for deliberation. His heart was crushed by the treachery of his wayward but beloved son. He gathered his family together with his immediate friends and set forth. It was a sad procession that passed down over the Kedron and across the slopes of Olivet; Zadok and the Levites bearing the ark, followed by the king barefoot and casting ashes upon his head. Behind them they heard the shouts of the people as they welcomed Hotspur to the throne, "Long live the king!" Now surely would begin the golden age.

The last chapter—at Mahanaim, beyond the Jordan. Here David had entrenched himself, and a constantly increasing army had gathered about him. It was now rumored that Absalom was on his way hither to dislodge

him. The battle would be joined to-day. The followers of David entreat him not to jeopardize his life in the high places of the field. He is only too willing to remain behind. How can he draw his sword against Absalom? He takes his place beside the gate to watch, and his last word of injunction to his lieutenant is, "Deal gently with the young man." The day wears on. From the distance come sounds of conflict. The fire kindles in the eyes of the old warrior. He sits beside the gate; naught but his love for Absalom could keep him here. To and fro the battle rages, until at length Absalom's army is turned to flight. In the wood of Ephraim he is caught by his long hair in the boughs of the terebinth. The enemy ride past in swift pursuit, forbearing to slay him because he is the Lord's anointed. Then Joab comes, his eyes aflame with the fury of battle, and thrusts three darts through Absalom's breast, and leaves him dangling there betwixt heaven and earth. Meanwhile the old king is waiting beside the gate. A messenger appears, running fast. "News, O king!" he cries. But what cares David for news save of his wayward son? "Is the young man Absalom safe?" And the herald, whose heart is full of compassion for the king, says, "There was a tumult, but I knew not what it was." But here comes another herald running, a Cushite, in whose heart is no tenderness. "News, O king!" The old man rises and eagerly questions him: "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" "May it be unto all thine enemies, O king, as it is with that young man." The worst is told. The old king staggers up the stairway to the chamber above the gate, wringing his hands, and moaning as he goes, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

In the flush of Absalom's prosperity he had caused a monument to be reared in the king's dale. It was doubtless an imposing marble shaft. He hoped that after his death posterity would write his splendid achievements upon it. Let us trace up the practical lessons of this wayward life upon the blank faces of that pillar to-day.

I. On one side let us inscribe, "*The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge.*" For there is a tremendous truth in heredity. Was it strange that Absalom should have taken unto himself his father's concubines? Or was it strange that the son of him who set Uriah in the forefront of the battle should have reddened his hands with a brother's blood? The fury of the tiger passes on to the tiger's cub. No man liveth unto himself, and, alas! no man dieth unto himself. We are like Alpine tourists, bound together in such a way that if one goes down the others must take heed lest they go tumbling after him.

II. On the second face of the monument let us write, "*The eye that mocketh at his father and despiseth his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out and the young eagles shall eat it.*" If Absalom was, at times, ashamed of his father, was that to be wondered at? David was a shepherd, and the smell of the meadows was always upon him. He had old-fashioned ideas of God and goodness. He was scarcely familiar with what his exquisite son would have called the *finesse* or accomplishments of social life. In the great city there is many a youth who can sympathize with him. You walk along Broadway with your old father who has come in from the country to visit you. His coat is out of fashion; his face is sunburnt; his hands callous; he stands agape at the show-windows or fearful at the street-crossings; you

smile, and are—just a little—ashamed of him. But that tawny hand, my boy, kept the wolf from the door when you were lying in your cradle, and one reason why his trowsers “bag at the knee” is because he has been kneeling in prayer for you. God pity the man who, for fashion or grammar, goes back on the father that begat him. Take heed of that “command with promise” given us long ago: “Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”

III. On the third side of the pillar let us write, “*Policy vs. Principle.*” I hate that word policy. We say “honesty is the best policy,” but the Lord have mercy upon a man who can put his honesty upon no higher plane! An ounce of principle is worth a ton of prudence. No doubt Absalom was praised again and again for his cleverness, and he was exceeding popular too. It is a dangerous thing to be popular. Not long ago I attended our class reunion at Yale, at which each was expected to give an account of his life during the years that had passed since we sang with each other under the elms. In the course of the night the president called upon one who was known for his genial qualities, and spoke of him as “always a good fellow.” “I don’t thank you for that,” said he, as he arose. “You mean kindly, I know. I was a good fellow in college. I tried to be a good fellow, and it was almost the death of me. For fifteen years after graduation I posed as a good fellow, when a thunderbolt from heaven went through my heart and conscience, and since then, for ten glorious years, I have tried to be a square man. You,” he said, turning to the president of the evening, “have a boy going to college next year. Tell him, for me, to take heed of the

danger that lies in being called a good fellow. Tell him there is nothing like manliness." Would that all our lads set out for college with that conviction. Oh, young men, be true to duty! Be true to God and to your fellow-men. Be true to yourselves, for nothing outside of divine revelation was ever more wisely said than this :

"To thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

IV. On the fourth face of the monument in the king's dale let us inscribe, "*The name of the wicked shall rot.*" Absalom had hoped for a splendid sepulture. There should be mourning when he died, the people saying—"A great man has fallen in Israel this day." They should bring wreaths and lay upon his bier. Loud wailings should follow him to his tomb. Instead of this, his grave was a pit in the wood of Ephraim into which he was cast with three arrows sticking through his breast. A heap of stones is shown to this day in the Valley of Jehoshaphat as Absalom's tomb, and every Jew who passes by hurls a missile at it, with the malediction, "Cursed be Absalom, and all his children after him."

We cannot, however, leave the matter at this point. Let us inscribe about the pedestal of this pillar, "*Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.*" It may be that there are some here who have been living wayward lives. Indeed, we all have wandered too far. Some have been in the far country, wasting their substance in riotous living. Thank God, it is not too late to mend. Out of our boyhood comes ringing the word that fell upon the ears of Dick Whittington, as he was trudging out of London weary and heart-sore : "Turn again, Whittington! Turn again, Whittington!

Lord Mayor of London!" God is very patient with his wayward ones. He does not cry, "Would God I had died for thee." He dies for us that he may save us. He does not cry, "O Absalom, my son! would God I had died for thee," but, "O Ephraim! how can I give thee up?" And he stretches forth his hands in constant entreaty, saying, "As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Turn ye! Turn ye! For why will ye die?" Yonder is the cross, to heal the wounds of the past. The blood cleanseth. The sins that were as scarlet shall be white as snow; the sins that were as crimson shall be as wool. The past is gone; the future beckons. Let us forget the things which are behind, by the mercies of God as manifest in Jesus Christ, and, reaching forth unto the things which are before, let us press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

AT THE HORNS OF THE ALTAR.

“And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.” 1 Kings 2:28.

WE have no occasion to waste sympathy on this man. He richly deserved all that befell him. His name, Joab, an abbreviation of “Jehovah-Abbah,” has in it a suggestion of loyalty to God; but what’s in a name? Many a John, James, Peter, Theodore, or Christopher has served the Prince of Darkness. So here. Joab was a man of blood. He assassinated Abner in the gate of Hebron. He met his friend Amasa in the way and greeted him, “Art thou in health, my brother?”—meanwhile fumbling for his dagger with which he thrust him under the fifth rib. No one else dared kill Absalom, as he hung by his glossy hair from the boughs of the terebinth, until this Joab came; he, without the slightest compunction, thrust three arrows through his breast. O, he was a bloody man! His girdle was smeared with blood; his sandals were sprinkled with it. But let even Joab have his due. He was loyal to his king, faithful always among the faithless. He scrupled at nothing. When David wished to dispose of Uriah he placed the matter before his commander-in-chief, who said at once, “Give yourself no trouble, I will attend to it.” But now his violent dealing came down upon his own pate. The old king was dying; he called Solomon to his bedside, and reminding him how Joab had shed the blood of war in time of peace and had put blood upon the girdle of his loins, he added, “Let not

his hoar head go down to the grave in peace." Accordingly, while Jerusalem was ringing with the cry, "The king is dead! Long live the king!" the order went forth, "Let Joab die."

And whither shall he flee? Not a home in Jerusalem will harbor him. There is not a cave in all Judæa where he can hide himself. One place only gives promise of security—the sanctuary at the horns of the altar. It is pleasant to reflect that God's altar has always been a refuge for the poor in his distress: even "the swallow hath found a nest for herself" under its cornice. The right of sanctuary is as old as the church itself. In the Middle Ages all sorts of evil doers took refuge in sacred places. Thieves and murderers were protected in the convents for forty days, when they were given up to the officers of justice. If, however, during those forty days the malefactor gave notice that he wished to leave England, he was stripped of his outer garments, a crucifix was placed in his hands, and he was thus conducted to the nearest port. If no ship was in waiting, he was required to walk into the sea thrice, up to his throat, in the name of the Holy Trinity; after which the ship which next appeared must give him passage across the sea.

It was in pursuance of this ancient right of sanctuary that Joab now clung trembling to the altar. Will this save him? Let us leave him there for a moment. There are helpful lessons to be drawn from his abject attitude. He is a type of the sinner trembling under the sentence of the violated law.

I. *Here is a suggestion of the ruling passion.* We are all cowards in the last reduction. Napoleon, who faced the allied armies of all Europe, was afraid of a mouse; and Wellington, who shrank not from confront-

ing Napoleon, dared not snuff a candle, so fearful was he of a little pain. Fear is the ruling passion of the race. The curse of Pashur has come upon us. He was that governor who "smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks." On the morrow when the prophet was released he said unto him, "The Lord has called thy name Magor-missabib;" *i. e.*, "Fear all about thee," and from that time the rustle of a leaf alarmed him.

But fear is a safeguard when there is real danger, and indeed our fears are oftentimes well grounded. 1. Our lives are in danger. This orb on which we live is whizzing through space with a rapidity far beyond that of the fastest railway train. Its axial speed is one thousand miles an hour; its orbital speed is a thousand miles a minute. Think of it! The vehicle is charged with explosives and combustibles. At the centre is a sea of molten metal. Every cubic inch of its enveloping ether has in it the potency of Euroclydon. Every drop of dew that falls upon its surface has a sleeping cyclone in it. The pestilence walketh in darkness. The rising dust of the thoroughfare is laden with microbes of fever. In case of an unexpected death we cry, "Strange that he went so suddenly;" but in reality the strange thing is not that the man dies, but that he lives for two consecutive instants. It could not be but for God's providence. "In him we live, and move, and have our being." His eye is upon this rolling world. He holds us in the hollow of his hand. Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without his notice. We go about our common tasks with a feeling of security because we are divinely cared for. We can trust God. 2. Of greater importance, however, is our spiritual danger. I say, "We are sinners," and no one trembles; and yet every one of us would shake like

an aspen leaf if he realized the full meaning of it, for sin is yoked with death. As it is written, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Now and then a man comes to a sudden apprehension of this fact, and he beats upon his breast and utters a sudden cry, "God be merciful!" Or, like the jailor of Philippi, "What shall I do?" If all alike, at a common instant, were to realize the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the tremendous fact that death comes following after, the very wheels of commerce would stand still; men would be found wringing their hands and kneeling in our streets. The cry, "*Miserere!*" would be heard, as during the Lisbon earthquake: The Lord have mercy upon us! As it is, our ears are dull and our eyes hoodwinked: so we go whistling to our tasks in the workshop, or sit singing in our homes, as if all were well—and the great multitude, one a second, lock-step, quick-step, pass out into the night. This was the tremendous truth that came to Charles Wesley while he stood at Land's End, with one ocean rolling on this side and another on that:

"Lo, on a narrow neck of land,
 'Twixt two unbounded seas, I stand,
 Secure, insensible.
 A point of time, a moment's space,
 Removes me to that heavenly place—
 Or shuts me up in hell!

"O God, my inmost soul convert,
 And deeply on my thoughtful heart
 Eternal things impress;
 Give me to feel their solemn weight,
 And save me ere it be too late;
 Wake me to righteousness!"

II. *There is a sure refuge*; only one. Let us make no mistake at this point. The Lord says, "When I shall

lay judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet, the hail shall sweep away their refuges of lies and the waters shall overthrow the hiding-place."

One of these refuges of lies is *bravado*. There are those who speak lightly of death and judgment. I passed but yesterday a group of young men on the corner of the street; they were earnestly engaged in conversation; one of them made some startling remark, to which another responded in a single word, and then all laughed. That word was "Hell!" Only cowards do that. The time will come when that young man, confronting the dreadful reality of which he spoke so bravely, will cry out for mercy to God. It is an awful thing to trifle with any truth, but to make merry about the tremendous things of eternity is to run upon the bosses of the shield of God.

Another of the false refuges is *indifference*. It has pleased God to address us with many voices of warning and invitation. It is possible, however, to hush them all. The epitaph of an ancient city was written in the words, "*Deleta Silentia*." The legend runs that its prince, having been alarmed once and again without cause, gave command that no word of evil tidings should be brought on penalty of death. He spent his days in comfortable ease and his nights in pleasure. The enemy came; the sentinel over the gate saw the approaching host, yet dared not sound the tocsin. His master was startled from his comfort by the shrieks of the dying when his palace was in flames and his city in the hands of his foes—*deleta silentia*—destroyed by silence! Thus many a soul, suppressing all the kindly influences from above, has gone on smiling towards death.

Another of the refuges of lies is trust in the *divine indulgence*. "God is love!" How fluently it falls from the

lips of those who otherwise deride him. True, God is love, but God is justice too, and holiness and truth. And his love and justice, his holiness and truth, all alike stand pledged to the integrity of that law, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." It is not possible that God by reason of his love should interfere with the operation of the just and salutary law, for that would be in the nature of a suicidal act; nor can he because he loves men prevent the sovereign freedom of the human will.

"Though God be good, and free be heaven,
 Not force divine can love compel;
 And though the songs of sins forgiven
 May sound through lowest hell,
 The sweet persuasion of his voice
 Respects the sanctity of will.
 He giveth day. Thou hast thy choice
 To walk in darkness still."

Another of the false shelters is *self-righteousness*. Not now the self-righteousness of those who live inconsistently within the church, but of those who lean upon their personal merit and feel in no need of church, of Christian fellowship, of prayer, or of the mercy of God. Sin has slain its thousands, but such morality its tens of thousands. He that keepeth the law shall indeed live by it, but his obedience must be flawless, for to offend in one point is to break the whole law. No man is without sin, but no sin-defiled man can enter the kingdom of God. So it is written, "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Our boasted merit is likened to a broken reed, on which if a man lean it will pierce through his hand; and again, "The bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself upon it and the covering is narrower than that a man can wrap himself in it." We are sufficiently warned.

"By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified." There is no difference; "we have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

And still another of the false refuges is *the church*. No man is saved by the church. It is indeed a divine institution and greatly loved of God. The church is his bride; He has graven her name on the palms of his hands. It is not the bride, however, but the Bridegroom that saves us. Thus Joab was torn from the very horns of the altar and slain. The right of sanctuary could not deliver him. In the last day there will be multitudes who will knock and cry, "Lord, Lord, open unto us: we have worshiped in thy sanctuary: we have been enrolled in the company of thy saints: we have wrought many wonderful works in thy name." And he from within shall answer, "Depart; I never knew you."

We come now to the one sure refuge: *the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*. His blood cleanseth, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. His word is our assurance: "I give unto them eternal life, and no man shall pluck them out of my hand." No grim Benaiah shall tear the penitent from this altar on Golgotha. Death and hell with their sinewy arms shall not prevail against him. He is safe. Safe for ever, because his life is hid with Christ in God.

At the opening of the sixth seal the earth reels and totters; the heavens are rolled up like a scroll; and the stars fall as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs. Then all the cemeteries of the earth yield up their dead and multitudes are heard calling upon the rocks and the mountains to fall upon them and hide them from the face of the Infinite One. But who are those, an innumerable host,

travelling towards the shining gates and singing as they go? These are they that have come up out of great tribulation, and they go to stand before the throne of God with palms in their hands, because they have washed their robes in the Lamb's blood and made them white. Oh! may we stand among them, the ransomed of the Lord, going to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.

We point you to Calvary. There is no other refuge against the day that trieth the souls of men. The God of the cross, with his hands stretched out, is a help to the poor and the needy in his distress; a refuge from the storm and a shadow from the heat when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.

“Beneath the cross of Jesus
I fain would take my stand—
The shadow of a mighty rock,
Within a weary land.
There lies beneath its shadow,
But on the further side,
The darkness of an awful grave
That gapes both deep and wide;
And there between us stands the cross,
Two arms outstretched to save,
Like a watchman set to guard the way
From that eternal grave.
O safe and happy shelter!
O refuge tried and sweet!
O trysting-place where heaven's love
And heaven's justice meet!
As to the Holy Patriarch
That wondrous dream was given,
So seems my Saviour's cross to me
A ladder up to heaven.”

“WE THREE KINGS OF ORIENT ARE.”

A CHRISTMAS MEDITATION.

“Seek, and ye shall find.” Matt. 7:7.

“Run ye to and fro, and see now if there be any that seeketh the truth.” Jer. 5:1.

“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” 1 Tim. 2:4.

“Jesus saith, ‘I am the truth.’” John 14:6.

“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East and are come to worship him.’” Matt. 2:1-2.

THE king of Judea was troubled. It was rumored that about this time a prince was to be born, in fulfillment of prophecy, who would assume the Jewish throne. Tacitus declares that the opinion was prevalent in the East that the Messiah of Israel was about to appear. Virgil had written his Fourth Eclogue, in which he announced the near approach of the golden age. A feeling of expectancy was prevalent everywhere. Herod was an old man, but still tenacious of his ill-gotten power. He was an apostate Jew, who long ago had forsaken the religion of his fathers to enter the service of the Roman government. His career had been a brilliant one. A *protégé* of Antony, he had, at a very early age, been made governor of Galilee and afterward tetrarch of Judea. He was a man of vast ambition; shrewd, cunning, and of violent passions; not above the tricks of a demagogue, he was never-

theless possessed of much cleverness and a vast executive ability. To please his royal master, he built the splendid city of Cæsarea. To conciliate the Jews, whom he hated, he rebuilt their temple and splendidly adorned it.

In the porch of this temple the old king was walking on a February morning nearly 1,900 years ago. His purple robes sparkled with gems and precious stones; a glorious ruby blazed in his turban; but his restless eyes betrayed a troubled heart. Off yonder, beyond the Kedron, a group of venerable strangers drew near; their long garments covered with dust. They would have attracted attention anywhere. Entering at the eastern or Shushan gate they climbed the marble stairway of the temple, entered Solomon's porch, and would have passed on into the inner courts but for the admonition of a Levite, who pointed to an inscription on the middle wall of partition: "Let no Gentile or unclean person enter here under penalty of death." Arrested by this rebuff, they said, "We have come from the far East, seeking him who is born King of the Jews. Tell us where we may find him." A moment later they were engaged in conversation with Herod. "Whence come ye?" "From the East." "And your errand?" "To find the promised King of the Jews." "It is a fool's errand; I alone am king of the Jews." "Nay, we cannot be mistaken, for we have come under divine guidance." And thereupon they told their story — how as they were watching the stars according to their custom, and meditating on the great promise of the coming Deliverer, a new luminary wheeled into view and seemed to beckon them. Was this a harbinger of that event for which they looked? While they wondered, it moved on towards the west and they arose and followed it. Their hope had been that the Jewish

Prince would be found in the Holy City, and they were amazed to find that nothing was here known of him. The wise men were detained while at Herod's order the members of the Sanhedrin came together to consult as to the rumored birth of this prince. They agreed as to the prophecy; the event was to occur in Bethlehem: “And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Judah, for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel.” The wise men were then permitted to resume their journey, with a parting injunction that they should return and report as to the success of their singular quest. As they set out, lo, yonder in the heavens the star moved along before them, and they followed with great joy.

We may find profit in the contemplation of these pilgrims. From time immemorial they have been regarded as kings :

“We three kings of Orient are,
Bearing gifts, we traverse afar
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.”

In the cathedral at Cologne there is a golden reliquary in which are preserved, in the odor of sanctity, the relics of these men. I said to the venerable monk in attendance, “Do you really believe that these are the relics of the wise men?” “Oh, yes,” he replied, “there is no question whatever as to their genuineness; we know their names—Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. The Venerable Bede tells all about them.” There is, however, a considerable doubt—to put it mildly—as to the trustworthiness of the legends which have gathered about these Magi. We have no reason to suppose they were kings, but we know they were truth-seekers; and, as Cromwell said to

his daughter, "To be a truth-seeker is to be one of the best sect, next to a truth-finder."

I. *The quest.* Wisdom is the principal thing, and there is nothing better than to get understanding. All truth is worth having. We blame our children for being inquisitive. But why? John Locke said, "The way to get knowledge is to ask questions." A wiser still has said, "Seek, and ye shall find." The cure for doubt is not a hoodwink, but a telescope. All truth is worth the having, and, therefore, worth the seeking. "Eureka!" cried Archimedes over a certain mathematical discovery. In all the world there is no pursuit so ennobling, so inspiring and so gladdening as the pursuit of truth. This holds in all the provinces, but especially in the province of spiritual things.

It is related of Edmund of Canterbury, who was deeply interested in secular researches, that one night as he was poring over an ancient parchment the spirit of his dead mother came to him and made three circles upon the palm of his hand, in token of the Holy Trinity, saying as she vanished, "Be this the purpose of thy life." These three circles do indeed embrace all. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom—and the end also. God is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. To know him is life eternal.

A man is in his noblest attitude when confronting the great spiritual verities. In this we are distinguished from the lower orders of life. We are able to touch the tremendous problems and measurably to solve them; and herein is the sweetest of life's delights. Lord Bacon said, "It is a pleasure to stand upon the shore and see ships tossing far away upon the sea; it is a pleasure to stand in the castle window and look down upon the battle and the

adventures thereof; but no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of truth and beholding spiritual things.”

II. *The harbinger.* God helps every man who earnestly desires to solve the problem of destiny. To these wise men he gave the guiding star. A vast amount of erudition has been spent in the attempt to get rid of the supernatural in these premises. It is said that a remarkable conjunction of certain planets occurred at about this time. In 1604 Kepler saw in the heavens a phenomenon which occurs only once in nearly a thousand years: Saturn and Jupiter were in conjunction; presently Mars also wheeled into line, thus forming “a fiery Trygon in Pisces.” The constellation of Pisces, or the Fish, was regarded as symbolical of Judea. The fish was also used by the early Christians as an anagram of Christ. Thus the “fiery Trygon” was identified with the star of Bethlehem. It is a fascinating hypothesis, but unfortunately (1) it did not occur at the precise time of the advent; and (2) being at an altitude of fifty-seven degrees it could not have paused over a village or a particular home. We are, therefore, led to regard the star as a special messenger—an angel with a torch, as it were—sent to direct these wise men in their earnest quest. So God interposes in behalf of every sincere seeker for truth. “Seek, and ye shall find.” Seek, good friend, and you shall find. God is on your side. Be of good courage.

It was many years ago that a butcher’s boy went singing ribald songs about the streets of Nottingham. A taste for knowledge brought him to Cambridge University, where he distinguished himself not only for his cleverness as a student but as a reviler of Christ. By the unexpected death of a companion he was brought to think seri-

ously of eternal things; his sins weighed heavily upon him; but at Calvary he found pardon. In the early flush of his conversion he wrote his gratitude in the familiar hymn:

“Once on the raging seas I rode;
 The storm was loud, the night was dark,
 The ocean yawned, and rudely blowed
 The wind that tossed my foundering bark.
 Deep horror then my vitals froze;
 Death-struck, I ceased the tide to stem,
 When suddenly a star arose:
 It was the Star of Bethlehem!

“It was my guide, my light, my all;
 It bade my dark forebodings cease,
 And through the storm and danger’s thrall
 It led me to the port of peace.
 Now safely moored, my perils o’er,
 I’ll sing, first in night’s diadem,
 For ever and forevermore,
 The Star, the Star of Bethlehem!”

God never yet left a man in the lurch who sincerely desired to solve the problem of destiny. It is a true saying, “A seeking sinner finds a seeking Saviour.” Somewhere in heaven the star is set that calls and beckons to the fountain of life.

III. *The treasure-trove.* The wise men have reached their destination. All the divinely kindled stars lead to Bethlehem. Here is the end of the great quest. The star that guided the Magi rested over a humble cottage. They entered and found the Christ-child—a child upon its mother’s breast! Is that all? Ay, all—and everything! In this child all the streams of prophecy converge. From this child radiate all the glowing lines of history. On the walls of the palace at Versailles, in a series of magnificent battle scenes, are portrayed the glories of France. In this

humble home at Bethlehem all the hopes of Abraham, the dreams of David and the visions of Isaiah are realized. This cottage is the centre of the world.

Are you, friend, seeking the truth? Follow your star. Hearken when God speaks. “There are so many voices, and none of them is without signification.” It is easy to quench all lights, to hush all voices; but hearken and give heed. Bethlehem is not far ahead. “Press on!” as Cromwell, the Lord Protector, said to his daughter, “press on, dear heart, and thou shalt find the satisfying portion. Let nothing cool thine ardor until thou find it.”

So here are the Magi opening their packs before the Christ-child. The search is over; the problem of destiny is solved. Here is gold for the King; here is myrrh for the Victor; here is frankincense for very God of very God. We are passing through the days of giving. We are celebrating now the infinite grace that lavished upon us the unspeakable gift, and what shall we render in return? I beseech you, brethren, by his great mercy, that ye present yourselves, a living sacrifice: which is your reasonable service. The best is none too good for God.

SANDALS FOR THE JOURNEY.

A NEW YEAR'S MEDITATION.

“Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be.” Deut. 33:25.

THE long journey was over. For a period of forty weary years the children of Israel had been going to and fro through the wilderness on their way to the promised land. The infants that had been carried out of Egypt in their mothers' arms were full-grown men and women. The desert path was lined on either side with graves. The word now comes to Moses, “Behold, the days approach that thou must die.” He maps out the promised inheritance and assigns it. He delivers the book of Deuteronomy as his valedictory to the people, and then sets out alone upon the mountain path. He betrays no tokens of age. His step is light, his eye undimmed, and his natural force unabated. The people watch him as he climbs towards the summit of Nebo. He pauses, at length, and looks about him. The white tents are below him in the valley. To the south lies the wilderness; to the west the land flowing with milk and honey. It is said that under such conditions a man's life passes swiftly before him; it may be that Moses lived over again his sojourn in the palace of the Pharaohs and the years of waiting in the Desert of Midian. He saw again the burning bush; he stood again before the murmuring people at Rephidim, and smote the rock in anger. He lifted his eyes toward the green fields

beyond the Jordan. Oh, if he might but enter in! Then the earthly scene faded from his sight. Far in the heavens was heard the singing of the angels; the air was filled with the rustling of wings; the sound waxed louder and louder; it rolled over him, folded him in, caught him up, and lo! Moses was at home with God!

It was as he climbed the mountain path that he turned to lay his benediction on the tribes. Is it not strange that, of all the blessings, the best was that which fell to Asher: the tribe that had wrought no memorable deed, out of which had come no hero or mighty one? Great was the blessing on little Benjamin: "He shall dwell between the Lord's shoulders." And that of Joseph, "His horns shall be like the horns of a unicorn, with which he shall push his enemies." And of Zebulun, "The abundance of the seas and treasures hid in the sands" shall be his. And Jeshurun, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." But with the memory of that long journey in mind, the thirst and weariness, the blazing sun, the scorching sands, there was no blessing like this: "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass under thy feet; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be."

We stand at the threshold of another year. The past is irrevocable. The Lord grant pardon for all its sins and short-comings! The future is before us. We may not draw the curtain. It is a *terra incognita*—an unknown land. How shall we prepare ourselves to go up into it?

I. *We know that tasks await us.* The life of a true disciple of Christ is not a sinecure. His prayer for us is that we may bear fruit—much fruit—more fruit. Mere passive piety is scarcely better than none at all. If we are followers of the Lord Jesus Christ we may not shrink from cares and burdens and responsibilities. Yet who is suffi-

cient for these things? If we set out alone and unprepared the journey will be too much for us.

We need a pair of sandals. Here they are—*weakness* and *strength*. Plato said, "Self-dependence is the secret of a successful life." On the contrary, it brings a sure failure. Did you ever try to pluck a cockle from the rocks? It is the very symbol of weakness, and yet it resists all your efforts to disturb it. The tempest that thunders against the rocks rolls past without dislodging it. Where is the secret of its strength? Its weakness. The vacuum beneath this tiny shell is what secures it. So it is the emptying of a Christian soul that prepares it for the enduement of strength. When I am weak then am I strong. My weakness—God's strength; these are the sandals wherewith we journey successfully along the path of duty. Here is the secret of Paul's efficiency. He was troubled with a thorn in the flesh. It may have been some physical infirmity, as many suppose; or it may have been a repugnant duty, or a responsibility beyond his seeming strength. Of this thing he says, "I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me." In vain; it was the Lord's pleasure that his disciple should bear this burden. Wherefore he said, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Then Paul began to sing, "Most gladly will I glory in my infirmity, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." He had added to a sense of personal weakness an assurance of divine strength, and thus shod for duty he might fearlessly approach his tasks: "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak then am I strong."

II. *Temptations are before us.* This must needs be. The grapes must be pressed or there will be no wine.

The gold must be tried in the furnace. The bell must be beaten with sledges before it is hung in the tower. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive—character ; the crown of life.

Here again we are provided with a pair of sandals ; to wit, *a present God and a true Bible*. We are never alone in the hour of trial unless we choose to be. A wrong-doer says, " I could n't help it ; the temptation was greater than I could bear." This is not true. It is never true. The word of the Lord assures us to the contrary. " God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." The old story of the three Babylonish youths is ever being repeated. They were true to principle : " Be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods ; and the form of the king's visage was changed against them. The furnace was heated " seven times more than it was wont to be heated " and the faithful youths were cast into the midst of it ; but the fire would not kindle upon them. In the midst of it they walked unscathed—in their coats, their hosen, and their hats. Then the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and cried, " Did ye not cast three men into the midst of the fire ? Lo, there are four, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." Nay, the fourth was the Son of God ; the same whose promise is sure for ever : " Lo, I am with you always ; I will not leave you alone, I will come to you." If we yield to temptation it is because we refuse his help. For he is not far from every one of us.

But for our double strengthening we have, besides this present Christ, the strong staff of his word to lean on. He himself took with him the sword of the Spirit when

he went out into the wilderness to be tempted. Thrice it flashed in the air—"It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone;" "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God; and him only shalt thou serve;" "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God"—and thrice the adversary fell back before it. Let the mind that was in Christ Jesus be also in us. If a man lose his confidence in the Scriptures as the veritable word of God he is like a soldier whose sword is broken at the hilt. Stand fast by the oracles, O follower of Christ! It is poor business for a believer to join in belated controversies as to the truth of the Scriptures. The Lord himself spoke never a word against the integrity of the book, but used it, expounded it, believed it, gloried in it. The disciple is not above his Lord. If you would be strong in the bitter hour of trial, drink at the crystal stream that "flows fast by the oracles of God." A Bible Christian is a strong Christian. Be shod with this preparation of the gospel—this pair of sandals: a present God, a trustworthy Bible—that you may withstand in the evil day.

III. *There are sorrows before us.* And where shall we find comfort? It is but grim consolation to say, with Eliphaz, "Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward." There is a point where the proverb "Misery loves company" ceases to avail and stoicism becomes a broken reed. It is related that a Hindoo mother, bereaved in the death of her only child, took the little body in her arms and went to and fro among the sacred teachers asking for something to restore its life. One of the sages said to her, "Pluck a handful of mustard from the garden of a home where sorrow never entered." Up and down the bereaved mother went in vain. One home was mourning for a father, another for a child; but none was

found where sorrow had not entered. At length she came to the Buddha and told her pitiful tale. "The dead are many," said he, "the living are few; go find thy comfort in tears." Is this the best that the Christless world can offer? Aye. But there is something better for us.

A pair of sandals for sorrow. Namely—*God knows*; and, *it shall work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*. Aye, God knows. There is blessed strength in that. A lad in one of our deaf and dumb asylums was asked by a visitor, "Who made the world?" He wrote upon his slate, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Then he was asked, "How do you hope to be saved?" To which he answered, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Once more: "How is it that, when the world is full of happy children, you have been deprived of speech and hearing?" The lad wrote in reply, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight." This is coming near to the Infinite Heart. This is drinking out of the wells of salvation indeed. God is not the author of our calamities. He does not go up and down scattering the germs of pestilence; this is the devil's work. But there is a sense in which God is present always in the midst of pain and sorrow. It does not spring up out of the ground. It does not come to pass without his permissive decree. He controls it, restrains it, and in the long run makes all things work together for good to them that love him.

And our affliction after all is "light, and but for a moment," in view of what lies beyond. A glance at the starry heavens reveals ten thousand times ten thousand worlds, and the longer we gaze the more come wheeling into view. "The floor of heaven is thick inlaid with patines

of bright gold." Our world is one of millions — countless millions, floating like a vast armada on yonder infinite sea. How little this world seems. How infinitesimal! So is time in relation to eternity. So is the pain of today to the glory of to-morrow. Our life is but a handbreadth. Eternity; eternity; how long art thou! The soul that has fled this moment from the vicissitudes of time into the glories of the unseen world is looking back and wondering; wondering, above all, that the pains and heartaches seemed so vast and insufferable. Oh! friends, they are light. They are but for a moment. The pearly gates throw their light this way. The hands of the angels beckon to a world where tears are wiped away forever. We can wait and be patient. "Bide a wee and dinna fret." Heaven is not far off.

Thus we set out, shod with the preparation of the gospel, to meet the tasks and duties and sorrows of the year. "Fear not," saith the Lord, "I will be with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

Let us make sure, however, that we set out aright. The beginning of a journey is in taking the first step. No man is ready to meet the vicissitudes of the coming year who has not thrown off his burden of sin. When Christian set out from the City of Destruction he bore his burden with him until he came to a hill on which was a cross, and at the foot of the cross an open sepulchre. As he drew nigh his load was loosened from his shoulders and rolled into the sepulchre, where, as he says, "It fell in, and I saw it no more." Then was his heart glad and light-some, and he cried, "He hath given me rest by his sorrow, and life by his death." For a while he gazed in

wonder at the cross, and when he turned three shining ones stood beside him. One said, "Thy sins be forgiven;" another, "Peace be unto thee;" and the third gave him a scroll with a seal upon it. Then the pilgrim gave three leaps for joy and went on singing; and this was his song:

"Thus far did I come laden with my sin,
Nor could aught ease the grief that I was in
Till I came hither. What a place is this!
Must here be the beginning of my bliss?
Must here the burden fall off from my back?
Must here the strings that bound it to me crack?
Blest cross! blest sepulchre! blest rather be
The Man that there was put to shame for me!

THE DUTY OF FAULT-FINDING.

“Brother, let me pull out the mote out of thine eye.” Matt. 7:4.

THE Sermon on the Mount was everybody's sermon. All kinds of people were in the congregation. The Master had a word for the poor, the weary and heavy-laden, the persecuted—and for all sorts and conditions of men. In one particular all the members of that congregation were alike; *i. e.*, they were all sinners. Some of them were unclean, others dishonest; some were addicted to one vice, others to another; but all alike had broken the moral law. But on the outskirts of the company were certain Pharisees who thought themselves to be better than others, and were universal censors—cynical, fastidious, contemptuous, and hypercritical. Here is the Preacher's word for them: “Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or, how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.”

The fault-finders, like the poor, “are always with us.” It is related that when the gods had determined to engage in the work of creation Jupiter made a man, Nep-

tune a bull, and Minerva a house. Momus, standing by, found fault with the man because he had no window in his breast; with the bull because its horns were not under its eyes; and with the house because it was not upon wheels, so that its inmates might move away from unpleasant neighbors. For this Momus was cast out of the divine councils, and ever since he has been among us. There are multitudes of people who, while doing nothing worth mentioning themselves, are clever in criticising the busy ones.

It must not be thought, however, that fault-finding is in itself a sin. On the contrary, it is a duty. In the Levitical law it was required: "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." It is enjoined also under the new economy: "Reprove, rebuke, with all long-suffering and doctrine." But there is everything in the art of putting things. A duty may become a sin if wrongfully done. How, then, shall we rightly go about this matter? How shall we find fault with our neighbors in such a manner as to help them and please God?

I. "*Cast out the beam out of thine own eye;*" for if the blind lead the blind they shall both fall into the ditch.

It is not to be understood, however, that perfection is required in the fault-finder, for in this case no one among us could discharge the duty. We are all alike and there is no difference; we have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God. There is a Spanish proverb, "If our faults were written on our foreheads we should all have to go with our hats pulled over our eyes." But it is required that before a man shall rebuke another, in any matter whatsoever, he shall, at the least, rid him-

self of that particular sin. As it is written, "Wherefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself, because thou doest the same thing." Do not preach temperance with a flask in your pocket. Do not advocate social purity while your lips are blistered by the telling of unclean tales. Do not prate about political reform if you remained away from the polls on last election day.

It is a curious fact that we are prone to criticise in others the faults to which we ourselves are most liable. It takes a rogue to catch a rogue. In one of our lunatic asylums there is a poor fellow who reached the depths of folly by squandering his inheritance and dethroning his intellect, and his finger is pointed at every visitor with the words, "God save the fool!" So before we undertake this duty let us heed the injunction, "Physician, heal thyself."

II. *Come out from your covert*: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between him and thee alone." The greatest evil is wrought by hints and innuendoes. Swift speaks of certain people who

"Convey a libel in a frown,
And wink a reputation down;
Or by the tossing of a fan
Describe the lady and the man."

Let us be frank and generous here. A says to B that C has been misbehaving himself. Then Mrs. A canvasses the matter with Mrs. B over their tea-cups, and presently the neighborhood is by the ears. Gossip is epicene: both sexes are alike addicted to it, and there is nothing meaner in all the catalogue of sins. Hear the law: "Thou

shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people: I am the Lord." Lev. 19: 16.

The meanest man of the olden time was Shimei, who had been befriended and honored by King David; but when adversity came, and the king, with his little retinue of faithful followers, went down across the Kedron bare-foot and casting ashes upon his head, then Shimei from behind the hedge cast stones at him, and cried, "Come out, come out, thou man of Belial!" The faithful Abishai asked, "Let me go over, I pray thee, and take off the head of this dog." But the generous king said, "It is not worth while." Set over against that the instance of Paul, who, when satisfied that Peter in withdrawing from the company of the Gentiles had proven false to his principles, sought him out and "withstood him to the face." It is thus that friendships are sealed and strengthened. The best of friends are parted by backbiting. The word itself is significant. The pestilent thing is out of sight. You hear it buzz, you feel the smart, but you cannot reach it.

III. *Put on charity as a garment.* "Charity suffereth long and is kind; charity envieth not, doth not behave itself unseemly, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil."

A Russian fable tells of a wise swine named Kavron that found its way into the court-yard of the palace, where it roved at will between the kitchen and the stable. On its return the master said, "Well, Kavron, what have you seen? I have heard that kings' palaces are filled with wealth and beauty; that there are fair pictures and splendid tapestries, and pearls and diamonds everywhere." "'T is all false," said Kavron. "I saw no splendor; nothing but dirt and offal." If we proceed in the same manner we

shall also reach a like result. There is some good in every man. It is the part of charity to look on the bright side of character. We may go into the back yard of a man's character and find all manner of noisome things; or we may go into his front garden and bear away with us the fragrance of the virtues there.

Of the many things that Lincoln said wisely and well there is none that will live longer than this: "With malice toward none; with charity for all; and with firmness for the right as God gives us to see the right."

IV. *Take care.* It is a delicate matter to pluck a mote or a cinder out of an inflamed eye. You would not go about it with a marline-spike. Yet I have known people to treat their neighbor's faults that way. They are rather proud of calling themselves blunt. They "call a spade a spade." From the ministries of all such may the Lord deliver us! Frankness is a glorious virtue, but bluntness is a vice.

It is the business of every one who would discharge this duty to study tact, which is "the art of putting things." It is easy to call a man hard names. Anybody could do that; but it takes an expert to help a brother by finding fault with him. Our Lord was a master of tact. He was resting at the well at Sychar when a woman came thither to draw. She was a woman of the town, whom most of us would have reproved forthwith in severest terms, but Jesus intends to beguile her soul to truth and goodness. Mark how skillfully he does it.

He saith unto her, "Give me to drink."

Then saith the woman, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, a woman that is a Samaritan? for the Jews have no dealings with us."

He answered, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and

who it is that saith, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."

She saith unto him, "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: whence hast thou that living water?"

Jesus answered, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

The woman saith, "Sir, give me this water."

Jesus saith, "Go, call thy husband." This was the driving of his sharp sword, and it cut between the very joints and marrow. He touched in these words the secret place of her sinful life.

The woman answered, "I have no husband."

Jesus said, "Thou hast well said, I have no husband, for thou hast had five husbands and now thou art living out of wedlock."

The woman—desiring naturally to change the theme of conversation at this point—said, "I perceive thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; ye say that Jerusalem is the place to worship."

Jesus saith unto her, "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when neither here nor yonder shall ye worship God: for God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

The woman saith (as if bewildered by this truth), "Sir, Messias cometh, and he will tell us all."

Jesus saith unto her, "I that speak unto thee am he."

This was the very perfection of tact. He effectively uncovered the shame of this woman, and yet in such a

manner as not to repel, but to attract her. A little later she was going up and down among her friends in Samaria, saying, "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"

V. *Change places.* Indeed, you will have to. For "with what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you again."

It is not meant that God will angrily apply the *lex talionis* to such as are severe in judgment, requiring of them "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." But in the nature of the case requital is sure to come. As a man soweth, whether in judgment or otherwise, so also shall he reap. Adoni-bezek was a barbaric prince whose custom was to torture and mutilate his captives. The time came, however, when he himself was a prisoner of war, and this was his lamentation: "Three score and ten kings, having their thumbs and great toes cut off, did gather meat under my table; as I have done so God hath requited me."

The law of recompense does not wait for a divine enforcement: it executes itself. Haman is ever on the way towards the gallows which he built for Mordecai. The royal fiend who gave the signal for the massacre of St. Bartholomew's must lie awake at night seeing red visions of carnage. The golden rule can be put into inexorable form, "As ye do unto others, so shall ye be done by."

We are accustomed to pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." There is a world of philosophy in that little word "as." The prayer falls glibly from our lips, but let us take heed how we offer it. For with what judgment we judge we shall be judged. It were better to omit that petition if we are of an unforgiving or censorious spirit. If we would pray aright we must put away all grudges, all malice and envying: then can we

say, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

VI. *Let the mind which was in Christ Jesus be also in us.* He was indeed a great fault-finder. But how graciously and skillfully he did it. When need required, he could hurl the very lightnings of denunciation: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! how shall ye escape the damnation of hell?" At other times he could reprove as tenderly as ever a mother chid her erring babe: "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." Love was the secret of his art. Like a good surgeon, he cut to save. On one occasion he girt himself with a towel and, basin in hand, went round among his disciples and washed their feet. "I have given you an example," he said, "that ye should do as I have done unto you."

We are bound to protect each other as far as possible from sin. Kindly reproof is oftentimes as gracious as the Oriental courtesy of washing the feet. Our faults are like the dust that gathers upon the feet in walking along the way. But there never was such a reproof on the earth as the cross itself. It stood yonder like a finger of admonition to put the world to an open shame. All the faults of all defiled hearts are laid open before it. The love of the Master, who died yonder, was love that should kill the foul spirit within us. He died because we were sinners; and yet, while showing forth that stupendous reproof of sin, he stretched forth his pierced hands and for ever covered it. Go, and do thou likewise.

THE BRANDED CONSCIENCE.

“Having their conscience seared with a hot iron.” 1 Tim. 4:2.

THE apostle is speaking of certain heretics and schismatics who had made their appearance among the members of the Ephesian church. He had previously admonished them. On his way to Jerusalem, when the Ephesian elders came down to the seashore to bid him farewell, he said, “Take heed to yourselves and the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers; for I know this, that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock.” That was five years ago. He now renews the warning: “The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.”

The reference may be to the ancient custom of branding slaves with their master's name. An habitual sin leaves its mark upon its victim; as it is written, “He that doeth sin is the servant of it.” Or possibly the reference is to the custom of branding a malefactor with his crime; it is the story of “The Scarlet Letter.” A bad habit puts us sooner or later under an ineradicable stigma. Or perhaps the reference is to the surgical operation known as cautery. The original word is *kauterizo*, meaning “to sear.” The dulling of the moral sense under the slow process of continuance in any sinful practice is not unlike the searing of raw or tender flesh.

But what is conscience? It is usually defined as the

faculty by which we discern between right and wrong. At this point the etymology will help us. The word is from *con-scire*, meaning "to know with." With whom? God. It is at this point that we approach nearest to him who created us. By conscience we are enabled to know certain things in agreement with God. In the last reduction, with respect to moral determinations, we are at one with him. Up yonder he is all the while passing judgment: *Mene, Mene, Tekel*. "Thou art weighed in the balance." In our inmost hearts we acknowledge that the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. It is conscience that responds Yea and Amen to his moral decisions. As to "the difference between the worse and better reason," to use the phrase of Plato, we know with God.

The science of casuistry is broad and bewildering. Many of the noblest philosophers have gone astray in it. Sir William Hamilton, Emanuel Kant, Herbert Spencer, and John Stuart Mill have in this province been "in wandering mazes lost." Yet there are some things which may be definitely asserted.

I. *Conscience is universal*. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord." God has not left himself without a witness. A man may be born blind, armless, or malformed in other ways; may be born destitute of imagination or love of the beautiful; but never was one born without the moral sense. It is indeed the vital organ of the soul. The heathen are represented as having this faculty, and they are therefore without excuse; because "they show the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness."

Up yonder in the starry heavens a beacon was kindled for the guidance of wanderers before the first of beacons

flamed upon the earthly heights, and it will shine when the glow of the last Pharos has gone out. Old Palinurus steered his bark by it. The Argonauts in their search for the Golden Fleece followed it as a beckoning finger of light. Abraham kept his gaze upon it, journeying along the Euphrates toward the country that he knew not. Columbus watched it from the bow of the Pinta. The Bedouins of the desert direct their course by it. The fugitive slaves followed it through forests and bayous to their bleak heaven beyond the northern lakes. And conscience, like the Pole Star, is guide for all. All other lights are quenched, but the candle of the Lord burns on.

II. *The universal conscience is disordered.* In all the world there is no inward sense which can serve as an infallible guide. What has wrought this harm? Sin. An inbound steamer was recently two hundred miles from Nantucket shoals, by compass and sextant, when the lookout cried "Land ho!" and the dangerous shoals were just in sight. It had chanced that the ship's carpenter carelessly drove a nail too near the magnetic needle. A slight deflection may cause a vast divergence at the open end of the angle. So sensitive is the conscience to sin. Here lies the danger of indulgence in any pernicious habit. When Nero ascended the throne he was so tender-hearted that on being required to sign the death-warrant of a slave he wept, and wished he had never learned to write. But the tiger whetted his taste on blood and soon learned to revel in it. When the cry "*Hoc habet!*" was heard in the amphitheatre he always gave the signal of death. What is your darling sin, my friend? The time was when you scrupled to indulge in it; but practice made it easier and your compunctions vanished in the course of time. The sin is just as sinful as ever, but you

have violated your moral sense until it has been given over to believe a lie.

In this callousness there is, however, no excuse for sin. The man who is brought red-handed before the court on the charge of murder pleads, "I was drunk, your Honor." But no court will extenuate his crime on that account. The responsibility is merely pushed back to the touching of the maddening cup. So the crime from which all crimes proceed is the deadening of conscience by persistence in evil. A man must answer for the perversion of his moral sense.

III. *But conscience is indestructible.* It may be chained and silenced, but not killed. Like a silenced angel it dwells in the Round Tower of the soul and bides its time.

When Nero had reached the consummation of all his wickedness in the murder of Agrippina he sent her body for burial beyond the seas; yet in the watches of the night he heard his mother's groans from that far-distant grave.

In like manner the conscience of King Richard awoke at Bosworth Field. The ghosts of his victims paraded before his tent: Grey and Vaughan and Rivers and Buckingham all saying,

"Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow!"

Then came the ghost of Hastings, saying,

"Dream on thy cousins smothered in the Tower."

Then the spectre of his murdered wife,

"Richard, thy wife that never slept a quiet hour with thee
Now fills thy sleep with perturbations."

Then the king awoke, confessing the immortal power of conscience:

“My conscience has a thousand several tongues
 And every tongue brings in a several tale,
 And every tale condemns me for a villain !”

When Lord Byron had worn out his glorious youth in frivolity and dissipation, finding himself old when most men are in the prime of manhood, he lamented thus :

“The mind that broods o'er guilty woes
 Is like the scorpion girt by fire ;
 In circle narrowing as it glows
 The flames around their captive close.
 So writhes the mind remorse hath riven :
 Unfit for earth, undoomed for heaven ;
 Darkness above, despair beneath,
 Around it fire, within it death !”

Here is the basis of eternal retribution. Sin is the seed of its own penalty. Memory will awake. The mind, as Milton says, “is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.”

IV. *The conscience can be restored to its original rectitude.* How? If one's watch is out of order he does not himself undertake to tinker it, but puts it in the watchmaker's hands. So let us deal with the disordered conscience. God made it and he alone can repair it. In prayer let us place the matter before him.

As with the watch so with the conscience: two things are necessary—a cleansing and a regulating. The *cleansing* is wrought at the fountain that has been opened for uncleanness; as it is written, “The blood of Jesus Christ shall purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.”

The *adjusting* is wrought through the Scriptures. All chronometers are regulated by the sun; all consciences must be adjusted to the mind of God. But where shall

that be found? In the Scriptures. The Scriptures are distinctively a setting forth of the divine mind. In them we have an infallible rule of faith and practice. The conscience goes wrong, but the Scriptures never. To the law and to the testimony therefore. You would be a conscientious man; but if conscience is a false guide there is nothing worse than to be a conscientious man. When, however, the moral sense is purged and brought into harmony with God's inerrant word, then there is nothing better on earth or in heaven than to follow its lead.

"When the conscience," says Dr. McCosh, "has lost its delicate sensibility and power of direction there seems to be only one method of restoration, namely, by placing it alongside of a pure standard of right and wrong; as the magnetized iron which has lost its virtue is restored by being bound up for a time with a correct magnet."

Hence the vital necessity of the Scriptures; and hence, moreover, the vital necessity of believing in their inerrancy. In them we have a "correct magnet," by which the trembling conscience may be adjusted to the divine will. To trust to conscience with no superhuman help is to lean upon a broken reed. The most flagrant crimes of history have been committed in the name of conscience. In the light of a thousand *autos da fê* we may read Paul's disclaimer: "I verily thought that I ought to do it." But conscientiousness is no excuse for sin, nor can sincerity extenuate a violation of the moral law. A man is bound to be right as well as sincere. To this end there must be some ultimate and exact standard of right. This is the claim made for the Scriptures; that they are "an infallible rule." And herein is the *rationale* of our Lord's injunction: "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think

ye have eternal life, and these are they which testify of me."

In the pictures of St. Gudule she is always represented as shielding a lantern with her hand. The story runs that, being required to pass through a dense forest on her way to the oratory, an evil spirit met her and blew out her light. A spark still lingered in the wick. She uttered a swift prayer, "Lord, help!" when straightway a warm breath from above rekindled it. Once more the evil spirit blew it out; another swift prayer, and again the warm breath rekindled it. And so until at last she reached the oratory. It is the parable of an earnest life. We journey toward heaven through a dark night. Pray without ceasing, oh, erring brother! Depend not on the lantern in thy hand, save as its clear light is assured by constant communion with God.

So at last we come to heaven's gate. And what is heaven? The secret of the great glory lies in our being in perfect harmony with God. A good conscience has the happiness of heaven in it. *Con-scire!* to have our minds in harmony with God's mind, our wills blending with the divine will—this is to enter into life.

The end of all is "peace of conscience." No more sin; no more struggling; no more bewilderment at the cross-roads of duty. All night Jacob wrestled at Jabbok. On the morrow he must meet his brother whom years before he had wronged, and he was sore afraid. But before he meets Esau there is Another with whom he must reckon. So he wrestles with his unseen foe, until, as the day breaks, he falls helpless upon his withered thigh. Then realizing that his antagonist is the Infinite One he surrenders, and receives his crown: "Thou art Israel, because thou hast prevailed with God." There is a war in

our members: the evil that we would not, that we do; and the good we would, that we do not. We are ever divided betwixt two. The struggle goes until we know our weakness. There is no triumphing with God until we fall helpless before him. Then, when the quarrel ceases in utter defeat, come the glorious victory and peace; peace "eternal, sacred, sure;" peace with self for ever and ever; peace with our fellows; peace with God.

THE HOLY GHOST.

“He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.” Acts 19:2.

THE apostle in his journeying came to Ephesus, and found there a company of twelve men who were trying in a rude way to live a holy life. They had learned from John the Baptist, whose disciples they were, the need of repentance, and they went with their heads hanging down like bulrushes. There was no gladness in their faith. Paul perceived that all was not right with them; something was wanting. “Have ye,” he asked, “received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?” They confessed that they had not learned of the great blessing which had come upon God’s people at Pentecost. Then Paul, having instructed them more fully as to the Lord Jesus, laid his hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost. Then signs and wonders. They spake with tongues and prophesied; they entered upon a glorious life of gladness and usefulness. The word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed among them.

We have our Bibles and litanies; we have our sanctuaries and family altars; we go through our prescribed forms of devotion; but, perhaps, there is something wanting. Where is the holy exhilaration that should characterize those who believe in the glorious gospel? Are we moved by a fervid passion for souls and a consuming love for the kingdom of God? Or is our devotion “faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null”? Are there

traces of tears upon our cheeks? Is the smell of the prison mould upon our white robes? If so, where is the trouble, or what is wanting? Have we received the Holy Ghost since we believed?

I. *Who is the Holy Ghost?* The third Person of the Godhead—a Person, not a mere energy or influence. Let us have no neuter pronouns here. We may say “it” of the influence of the Holy Ghost, but not of the Holy Ghost himself. He is distinctly a Person, as really as the Father or the Son. Were you to refer to me as “it” I should have just ground for offence. I am not a thing. Surely, then, it is not reverent to speak of the third Person of the Godhead in that way.

II. *What is the relation of the Holy Ghost to the other persons of the Trinity?*

In theological terms, the Son is “sent” by the Father and the Holy Ghost “proceedeth” from the Father and the Son. All human history may be divided into three dispensations. The *first* is the dispensation of the Father, who ruled this world during the old economy. This dispensation closed in that long night of darkness which preceded the coming of Christ. The *second* dispensation was that of the Son, which continued for about thirty years, while he lived and labored and preached among men. It closed in the darkness that enveloped the cross when Jesus cried, “It is finished!” The *third* dispensation, under which we are now living, is that of the Spirit. It began when Jesus, returning from the grave, breathed on his disciples and said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” The work of the Spirit will continue until the restitution of all things in the consummation of the divine kingdom on earth.

III. *What are the offices of the Holy Ghost?* As we

proceed from this point we shall discover that the Holy Ghost is related to us in various ways; so closely that our spiritual life depends upon our knowing and honoring and serving him.

1. *He is the Reprover.* Our Lord said, "And when the Holy Ghost is come he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on him; of righteousness, because I go unto my Father; and of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." The Spirit wields a two-edged sword, which is quick and powerful to the dividing asunder of the very joints and marrow and of the soul and spirit of man. He speaks through the conscience; our scruples and compunctions are from him. He rebukes and convinces and convicts; so that when his perfect work is done the man approaches God in humble contrition, beating upon his breast and crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

2. *He is the Reminder.* The Lord said, "He shall put you in remembrance of whatsoever I have said unto you." And again, "He shall take of mine and show it unto you." It is one of the special functions of the Holy Ghost to keep in remembrance the redemptive work of Jesus. Great men and their deeds are apt to be forgotten. As Hamlet said, "Die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope that a man's memory may outlive him half a year." But the name and mighty work of Jesus can never be forgotten, because the Holy Ghost perpetuates it. It is under the authority and appointment of the Spirit that the army of ministers and evangelists goes forth to preach Christ, and him crucified. It is through him that the old, old story is kept fresh and vivid before the minds of men. It is through him that the

prophecy of the Saviour himself shall be fulfilled: "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

3. *He is the Regenerator.* The Lord said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he shall not see the kingdom of God." The day of miracles has passed away, but one great miracle is ever being enacted in the restoration of fallen humanity. We cannot explain it, but we perceive the fact occurring again and again about us. Men are mysteriously brought out of darkness into light. Their characters are revolutionized; so that, with them, old things have passed away and all things have become new. This is the work of the Spirit. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit of God."

4. *He is the Teacher.* The Lord said, "He shall guide you into all truth." The summary of spiritual truth is the Scriptures. "Search the Scriptures," said Jesus, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and these are they which testify of me." The Romanists say it is dangerous to entrust the Bible to the laity, because, being misunderstood, it is likely to be perverted; and the priest is, therefore, imposed upon men as the mediator of truth. The premise is correct; the conclusion is false. No man indeed can, unaided, read the Scriptures and apprehend them. But the only mediator of truth is the Holy Ghost; as it is written, "The natural man receiveth not the things of God, for they are foolishness to him; because spiritual things are spiritually discerned." The Holy Ghost, as Author of the Scriptures, is alone able to explain them. The Earl of Chatham, when in the Highlands, attended a village church and listened to a profound sermon on the

Decrees. As he passed out he said to an old woman, "Did you understand?" "Aye, sir," she answered; and then seeing the bewildered look upon his face added, "but I perceive that you are in the dark. Sir, your eyes must be anointed with the eye-salve of the Spirit or you will never be able to comprehend the deep things of God."

5. *He is Master of the Seals.* Like the High Chancellor of an Oriental government, he wears the signet ring without the impress of which no conveyance is valid. Thus it is written, "Ye are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the promised possession." We speak of "assurance"; we greatly desire to read our title clear to mansions in the skies: if we have assurance it is through the communication of the Holy Ghost; as it is written, "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."

6. *He is the Comforter.* The word thus rendered is in the original *Paraclete*, from *para-kalein*; *i. e.*, "to call to one's side." The Paraclete is one who draws near at our cry of distress. In sorrow he brings consolation; in weakness he brings strength; in adversity he comes to assure us of the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. If we yield to temptation it is because we prefer to stand alone resisting it. We do not call the great Helper to our side. Out in the wilderness of Beersheba the exiled Hagar was famishing with her child. The water was spent in the bottle, and casting the child under an acacia bush she went away, as it were a bowshot, and sat her down, for she said, "Let me not see the death of the child." But God heard the wailing of the little one, and he called to Hagar out of heaven, saying, "What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not; God hath heard the voice

of the lad." Then her ears were unstopped and she heard the babbling of water. Her eyes were opened and she saw a fountain near by. Thus it is that the Holy Ghost hears us in our distress and runs at our cry. He is with us in six troubles, and in seven he will not forsake us.

7. *He is the Sanctifier.* Our life should be marked by a perpetual growth. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit." To walk in the Spirit is to walk in the path that shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. The Holy Ghost is not so called because he is holier than the Father or than the Son, but because it is one of his special functions to administer holiness—to lead God's people by continual growth in grace unto the likeness of Christ.

We hear much of the Higher Life. The Higher Life is only to live in the Spirit, under the influence of the Spirit, following the behest of the Spirit. We look from the shore upon two ships out upon the open sea. They both alike seem to be standing still; but could we look upon them from above we should see that one is at rest with sails flapping in a dead calm, while the other is tacking to and fro and making a slow but constant progress toward port. What makes the difference? The wind in the sails. In like manner we may not be able to distinguish between the outward appearance of two Christians; the one of whom is making little or no progress in the Christian life, while the other is moving on by constant acquisitions of grace towards perfection. There is, however, a most important difference. What makes it? The breath of the Infinite One. The influence of the Spirit of God.

8. *He is our Helper*; as it is written, "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered." The groanings here referred to are indeed not those of the Spirit, but those of the poor suppliant who cannot articulate his prayer. Not long ago I called upon a bereaved wife who had been left desolate with her three children. Her burden of sorrow seemed heavier than she could bear. In answer to my question as to whether she had prayed over it, she said, "No. I believe in the good Lord, but I cannot pray; my heart is as heavy as lead; my lips are parched and dry." It is to such suppliants that the gracious Spirit comes with timely help. When our groanings cannot be uttered He maketh intercession for us.

9. *He is our Guide*. The best definition of a Christian that ever was given is that of the Apostle Paul: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Our life is a journey. There are ups and downs and cross-roads that bewilder us. We are like the children of Israel who went out of the Egyptian cities, a great mob of fugitive slaves, into an unknown wilderness, going to a land that they knew not. But yonder in the heavens was the divine token. It went before them, a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, as they struggled on, compassed about by enemies and hindered by untold difficulties, until it led them into the land that flowed with milk and honey. The Holy Spirit leads us as veritably as God led Israel in the olden time. There is no reason why we should ever go wrong. Sin is utterly unreasonable. We have only to follow the divine guidance and heaven is straight before us.

10. *In fine, the Holy Ghost is the Executive of the Church.* We return to our starting-point. This is the dispensation of the Spirit. He is carrying out through the church the glorious purpose of Jesus in his redemptive death. The success of the church depends upon the pervasive influence and invigoration of the Holy Ghost. In the vision of Zechariah he saw a golden candlestick with seven lamps; in the midst was a bowl of oil communicating with the lamps through seven pipes. The prophet said, "What are these?" The angel answered, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." In vain is all the splendid machinery of the visible church if the Spirit does not use it. The most eloquent ministry is but an array of meaningless ciphers until the Spirit of God shall place himself like an omnipotent unit before it; then the ministry leads the church as an invincible army to the conquest of the world, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Two concluding words: *a warning and a promise.* It is the Master's *warning*: "All sins shall be forgiven, but the sin against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven you." The rejection of the overtures of the Holy Spirit is, in the nature of the case, the unpardonable sin; for it is the casting away of the only clew to the labyrinth; it is the closing of the only door of heaven; it is the quenching of the only beacon that lights us to the kingdom of God.

The promise is a glorious one: "If earthly parents know how to give good gifts unto their children, how much more shall your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him!" This is the unspeakable gift, and it may be had for the mere taking. The most famous of bridal gifts was that to Placidia from her de-

voted prince. As she came from the altar she walked between a double line of fifty princes each holding a basin: one of pearls, another of rubies, another of diamonds; and as she passed each was presented, with the words, "That you may never want." A gift unspeakably more glorious is presented to the soul at its espousal with Christ. Here is the casket of all jewels: "How much more shall your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him!" Life, happiness, transcendent hope and glory are here. Oh, for the unspeakable gift! Come, Holy Spirit, come!

WALKING WITH GOD.

“And Enoch walked with God : and he was not ; for God took him.” Gen. 5:24.

IN this fifth chapter of Genesis we have a procession of nobodies. Adam and Seth and Cainan and Mahala-leel and Jared—these are mere names. There are those who count themselves fortunate in being able to trace their lineage back through some generations to a baron or a blacksmith, as the case may be, but here is something better.

“A prince can mak a belted knight,
 A marquis, duke, and a' that ;
 An honest man's aboon his might—
 Guid faith, he maunna fa' that !
 For a' that, and a' that,
 Their dignities, and a' that,
 The pith o' sense and pride o' worth
 Are higher ranks than a' that.”

The proudest genealogy which any man can boast is that which makes us part and parcel of the human family ; as it is written, “ He was the son of Seth, who was the son of Adam, who was the son of God.”

As we pass along this monotonous list of our commonplace and insignificant forebears, we suddenly come upon one whose life, embraced in a brief sentence, is suggestive of interminable chapters of duty gloriously done—
 “And Enoch walked with God.”

The walk is significant of the manner of life. It is our walk that carries us about to and fro, from door to door, and makes us part of the great busy world. So life is aptly represented as walk and conversation, the latter word being from *convertere*, "to turn about." You may stand at the corner of Broadway and pass judgment with some degree of certainty upon the character of the passing multitude by the manner of their walk. Here is one whose step is firm and rapid—manifestly a man of purpose; here is another who threads his way in and out—a schemer; here is one who struts past, erect and heedless of others—a self-opinionated man; one staggers by—the manhood is gone out of him; one shuffles by, "interferes," as horsemen would say—a shiftless good-for-naught; another passes with a mincing gait—a small man; one saunters by with a jaunty air—a "thing of beauty" but of little or no practical account; here goes a plodder, who sets his foot down heel and toe—a commonplace man, but adept, as they say, in "the art of ultimate arrival." Thus does the gait betray the man.

Not without reason, therefore, are we exhorted in Holy Writ to walk aright; to walk before God in the land of the living; to walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise; to walk in the truth; to walk in our houses with a perfect heart; to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing; to walk after the Spirit; to walk in newness of life; to run in the way of the Lord's commandments; to walk in the light of his countenance; to walk by faith. "I beseech you," says Paul to the Ephesians, "that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

“ Oh for a closer walk with God,
 A calm and heavenly frame,
 A light to shine upon the road
 That leads me to the Lamb !”

The sum total of a holy life is embraced in this expression, “to walk with God.” It implies the closest and most intimate relation with him. He is, so to speak, our companion on the long journey ; our comrade in struggle ; the sharer of our plans and purposes ; our friend and confidant.

But prior to any such association with the Infinite One it is obvious that there must be a reconciliation with him, for by nature we are not on good terms with God. In the beginning Adam walked with God “in the garden in the cool of the day.” There was nothing between them. Then came sin and opened the mighty chasm of separation ; and since then the condition of the race is set forth in those pregnant words, “The carnal mind is enmity against God.” It is obvious, therefore, that before the pleasant walk of confidence can be resumed there must be reconciliation. For

“ In friends
 That do converse and waste the time together,
 Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,
 There must needs be a like proportion
 Of lineaments, of manners, and of spirit.”

It has pleased God to make an overture of peace in the gospel of Christ. The cross is a flag of truce. In accepting Christ we make our peace with God ; as it is written, “ You, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh, through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in his sight.” When we

have attended to this prerequisite, and not before, we are ready to walk with God.

Then three things are necessary, as one commentator says, that we may walk consistently with Him; to wit, like-mindedness, spiritual-mindedness, and heavenly-mindedness.

I. *Like-mindedness*. "Can two walk together," asked Amos the herdman, "except they be agreed?" It was in the time of Israel's degeneracy; the altars flamed with sacrifices, the temple was thronged with worshippers, but all was superficial. The people smote with the fist of wickedness and were at variance with God.

If we are to walk in friendliness with Him there are some things concerning which there must be no difference of view. One of these is *sin*. What does God think about sin? It is filth, leprosy, palsy, bondage, virus, mortification, death. He says, "Thou shalt not bring an abomination into thy house; but thou shalt utterly destroy it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it, for it is an accursed thing." This is how God regards it. What, now, do you think of it? Do you cherish the unclean thing? Have we "a darling sin"? God is pleased to represent his relation to the redeemed soul as that of the bridegroom to the bride; as he says, "Henceforth thou shalt call me no more Baali, but Ishi;" that is, not, my master, but, my husband. But can the husband love the wife who holds an ill-gotten child in her arms? So is a darling sin in the sight of God. If we are to walk in friendly converse with him we must put the abomination from us.

And then another fact as to which there must be no difference of opinion is *salvation*. It has pleased God to devise a plan of salvation as revealed in the gospel, of which he says, "There is none other name under heaven,

or given among men, whereby we must be saved." This plan of salvation centres in Christ. What does God think of Christ? He says, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." What think ye of Christ? Is he a root out of a dry ground? Has he no form or comeliness that you should desire him? Or, are you also well pleased in him?

II. *Spiritual-mindedness.* The line is clearly drawn in the Scriptures between those who live unto the flesh and those who live unto the Spirit, as in the eighth of Romans, where the apostle says, "There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do God did by the sending of his own Son to condemn sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Here the two levels of life are clearly defined—the level of the flesh and the level of the Spirit.

To the former belong all such as give themselves to sordid pursuits; who are troubled as to what they shall eat and drink and wherewithal they shall be clothed; who are chiefly troubled about a livelihood or self-indulgence. If the flesh were the whole man this would be sound philosophy; let us then eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. Death ends all.

On the other hand, those who live unto the Spirit, as being akin with God, who is a Spirit, make much of the

higher nature. The abundance of their life consisteth not in the things which they possess. They lay the deepest emphasis on duty and character and responsibility. To them "ought" is a great word. The business of their life is religion in its etymological sense; that is, the binding back of the soul to its Creator: they seek first the kingdom of God.

III. *Heavenly-mindedness.* We are pilgrims and sojourners here. We pass through life like Abraham, who built no house, but dwelt in tents, moving on in obedience to the Voice, ever looking for a better country, even a heavenly, and for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

The man who realizes that he is merely sojourning here, and passing on to another country where he shall dwell for ever, will surely concern himself as to that future land. Sir Walter Raleigh, when he had determined to sail to Virginia, took the precaution of discovering whatever might be known as to the topography of that far-distant land. He made inquiry of travellers who had been there; he consulted the maps. Much more, if we are going to the celestial country to make eternal dwelling there, we should be concerned to learn whatever may be known about it.

Still further, the man who expects to make his endless home in another land will certainly take pains to adjust himself to the modes and customs which prevail there. If Canaan is to be our home we should be mastering its language. If all its inhabitants wear white robes we should assure ourselves that a white robe will become us. If it be true that in that country "His servants do serve Him," we should here be practising an implicit, unquestioning obedience. If over the gateway is written, "There

shall in no wise enter anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie," then we should be scrupulously keeping ourselves unspotted from the world. If they sing there "Worthy is the Lamb to receive honor, and glory, and power, and dominion for ever and ever," we should attune our voices here in adoring praise.

"All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all."

In one of David's Psalms he likens the upward progress of a redeemed soul to the flight of a dove: "Though ye have lain among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold." The flat roofs of those days were used for the storage of all sorts of rubbish; shards and broken furniture were deposited there. The doves made their nests among this litter, and at daybreak they might be seen emerging and darting upward and careering through the air; their wings caught the rays of the morning sun as they wheeled round and round. The glory shone against their breasts. Gold! Silver! So from the lower life of sordid cares and pursuits the soul mounts upward in communion with God.

But Isaiah is bolder. He likens the spiritual life to the flight of an eagle: "They that wait upon the Lord shall be as Mount Zion which cannot be moved; they shall mount up as on eagle's wings." The eyes of the eagle are towards the noon-day sun. See how on poised wings he rises higher and higher. An intervening cloud hides him from sight for a brief moment. Up yonder he appears—a mere spot upon the blue—still mounting upward,

to kindle his undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam.
So

“Rise, my soul! and stretch thy wings;
Thy better portion trace;
Rise from transitory things
Toward heaven, thy native place!
Sun and moon and stars decay;
Time shall soon this earth remove:
Rise, my soul! and haste away
To seats prepared above.”

The end of Enoch's life was worthy of its calm majestic flow: “And he was not; for God took him.” His life, as lives were counted then, was a short one. He died at the age of three hundred and sixty-five years. His son Methuselah lived nine hundred and sixty and nine, but Enoch's life was the longer, for he filled it full of heavenly service. He walked along the celestial heights communing with the Infinite: on towards the glorious sunset, until one day the crimson gates rolled back and he passed in. Death? Oh, no! Enoch did not die. God took him, and passing in he continued to walk with God. So let us live, good friends, that at the last our transition may be as calm and peaceful as Enoch's. A good life is the preparation for a pleasant death.

“So live, that, when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan that moves
To the pale realms of shade, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not like the quarry slave at night
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.”

THE ARMY OF THE POOR.

“ He said unto them, Give ye them to eat.” Mark 6:37.

“ THE poor,” said the Master, “ ye have always with you.” At this present juncture they are multitudinously with us.* Let us observe the army of the poor as it files past us.

Here they come: professional beggars leading the way. Poverty is their business; rags and tatters are their stock in trade. What shall we do for them? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. For every penny to the professional beggar is a penny less to the deserving poor.

Here they come: a multitude of tramps following after—the unstarched throng. Not long ago they jostled each other along the country roads; knocked at the doors of the farmhouses; made their nests in the hay-mows; but now they have swarmed into the great metropolitan centres. They are our Bedouins. They have no desire to work. Their philosophy is in this: “ The world owes me a living.” But the world owes no man a living; the debt is all the other way. My brain and sturdy arms and legs owe me a living. God help me to exact it. But what have we for the tramps? Nothing. Not a farthing. For every farthing bestowed upon them is a farthing less for the hungry and deserving poor. The Scriptures give us our cue: “ If a man will not work, neither shall he eat.”

* This sermon was preached in a time of general want and distress.

These wandering good-for-naughts are the burden of every community. To feed them is to foster the curse. Even the bees do not feed their drones; they sting them to death.

Still here they come: thousands on thousands of wretched ones exhaling an odor of strong drink. It is a curious fact that in this season of great distress the nine thousand saloons of New York are doing a flourishing business. The employing agencies report that only two classes of employés are in undiminished demand: cooks and brewers. The drink habit does not pause for famine. As yet, thank God! no case of death by starvation has been reported among us; but there are deaths from inebriety every day. In the year of the Irish famine, when we were sending shiploads of wheat and potatoes from this country to save the multitudes of the Emerald Isle from starvation, they consumed four millions of bushels of grain in malt liquors and drank ten hundred thousand gallons of whiskey! Aye, men who have this habit fastened on them may be starving but they drink right on. What shall we do for them? Nothing. Certainly it would be no kindness to place money in their hands to pass across the bar. To contribute at this juncture for the gratification of this passion for drink is to diminish our gifts by so much to the deserving poor.

Now half the army has passed by and still they come: the multitude of the unemployed. God pity them! It is "hard lines," as the Scotch say, when an industrious man can find no work. We leave to others the discussion of the question why so many of our industrial establishments and factories are closed. We have to do with a condition, not a theory. The fires are banked, the hammer is still upon the anvil, and workless men are going

about our streets; and the worst of it is that in a vast majority of cases they have saved nothing for the "rainy day." One is tempted to preach them a sermon on the nimble penny. It were a vain thing, however; for, as Cato said in the presence of a hungry multitude, "You cannot speak to the stomach, because it hath no ears." It is enough that these men have been honest and industrious and are now in want. What shall we do for them? Help them. By all means help, in the name of the Lord Christ.

But to make the matter worse, still they come: wives and mothers, blue-lipped and hollow-cheeked, with little children, wan and sorrowful, clinging to their skirts. These are innocent of blame as the sparrows that chirp in our streets. What shall we do for them? Help them in the name of humanity and at the word of the Master, who, seeing the multitude, had compassion upon them, and said to his disciples, "Give ye them to eat."

I. *To minister to the poor is part of the business of the Christian Church.* There are sentimentalists who say Christianity is charity. That, however, is but a fragmentary statement. Christianity rests on two great pillars: (1) *Truth.* It opens up to us the great problem of the future life. It tells of God and of immortality. The Scriptures are a compendium of all spiritual truth. (2) *Ethics.* It offers us the decalogue and the golden rule, with Christ standing between them, and in these as the basis of character we have the sanctions and safeguards of personal and social life. On these two pillars rests the superstructure of practical Christianity.

All practical Christianity may be embraced in a single word—salvation. By salvation we mean not mere deliverance from spiritual death, but the uplifting of the

whole man, body and soul, for time and for eternity. The purpose of Christianity is to bring man—the whole man—into the kingdom of God. This means the betterment of his life here and forever. We do not help the matter by saying, sentimentally, that kindness is all. We are bound to say, however, that universal kindness is an essential part of Christianity. The best definition that has ever been given of religion is that of the Apostle James: “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world ;” *i. e.*, it consists on the one hand in the building up of character by absolution from sin and growth in holiness, and on the other hand in being good along the way.

II. *The church has been attending to its business in this regard with more or less faithfulness ever since the beginning of the Christian Era.* A little history at this point will help us. At the time of the advent of Christ the known world was under the domination of Rome, and the sovereignty of Rome centered in the imperial city. The population of the city of Rome was estimated at a million and a half. A glimpse at the character of that population will enable us to form a conception of the universal condition of things. Uhlhorn says that of the population of Rome “only about ten thousand belonged to the higher orders.” These, the patricians, lived in unspeakable luxury ; they dwelt in palaces, clothed themselves in purple and fine linen, and put the whole world under contribution for the supply of their groaning tables.

“ On that hard pagan world disgust
And sated loathing fell ;
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell.

In his cool hall with haggard eyes
The Roman noble lay ;
He drove abroad in furious guise
Along the Appian way ;
He made a feast, drank fierce and fast,
And crowned his hair with flowers :
No easier, nor no quicker, passed
The impracticable hours."

Of the remainder not less than a million were slaves, whose condition was indescribably wretched. The rest of the population consisted of the *plebs urbana* ; these were Roman citizens, penniless, and too proud to work. They regarded work as the business of slaves. How then did they live ? As clients at the houses of the great. Games were provided for their entertainment. It is said that there were three hundred and eighty-five thousand seats in the amphitheatre. At the beginning of every month a ticket, called *tessara*, was given to each plebeian, entitling him to draw five bushels of wheat, and besides this an allowance of money ; in the time of Cæsar these subsidies were given to not less than three hundred and twenty thousand persons. From this brief outline it is evident that not more than one in one hundred of the population of Rome was self-supporting. All the rest were slaves or mendicants. This order of things has been justly characterized as "a world without love."

Into that world came Jesus the Christ. He came to uplift the masses ; to bring about such a betterment of the temporal and spiritual condition of the multitudes as should ultimately bring them into the kingdom of God. He began the announcement of his mission in these words : "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor." That gospel has for these eighteen hundred years been

leavening the lump of human society. By it the condition of the masses has been ameliorated with each succeeding year. As we look back over the eighteen centuries which have passed it is plain to see that Jesus has done four notable things for the poor.

(1) *He has taught the equality of man.* He was himself a man of the people. His ministry was among the multitudes. In the organization of his church "not many mighty, not many noble were called." The genius of his entire ministry was formulated by St. Paul in that famous manifesto: "God hath created of one blood all nations of men." And there is no difference: Jew and Greek, barbarian and Scythian, bond and free, all are one in Jesus Christ; because there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.

(2) *He has taught the dignity of labor.* A divine wisdom was manifest in the fact that Jesus, coming from heaven under a commission to exalt the multitudes, took part with them in the fellowship of toil. He was himself a carpenter. He knew what it was to grow weary in a workshop. And in his fellowship all honest workmen are dignified. Indolence alone is dishonorable.

(3) *He has brought about, by the operation of His gospel in successive centuries, the equitable distribution of wealth.* It cannot be said of any city in Christendom, as of ancient Rome, that in a population of a million and a half all money is in the hands of a meagre ten thousand. A system of work and wages was certain to change that order of things. It is not true, as agitators sometimes say, that the rich are growing richer and the poor are growing poorer. On the contrary, the condition of the poor is being bettered every day. This, however, cannot be said of nations that lie beyond the charmed circle of Christen-

dom. There is said to be a millionaire in Hong Kong, by name Han Qua, whose wealth is estimated at sixteen hundred millions of dollars.

(4) *The teaching of Christ has brought about a general diffusion of education.* His gospel is the gospel of light. He universalized the quest for truth when he placed the search-warrant in the hands of the humblest, saying, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life." Therein is the franchise of all our schools and universities.

Thus the teaching of Christ has levelled up the race and brought the average citizen to the position of a self-respecting man. The gospel of Christ has created the "Third Estate," and this is the sum total of charity. The best form of alms-giving is that which makes beggary impossible by placing the beggar beyond the need of it.

III. *As to the business of the church in the present emergency.* What are we to do for the multitude of those who are stretching out their hands? "Give ye them to eat."

There is, however, a right way as well as a wrong way of administering alms. "Blessed is he that considereth the poor." The word "consider" suggests the need of prudence.

(1) *Let us not give sentimentally;* for true charity is based not on sentiment, but on sound common sense. The heart prompts an alms, but the head directs it. Much of our giving is from mere impulse. On yonder corner is a beautiful blind girl; her face itself makes a touching appeal, and there is a fortune in it. Every passer-by is moved to give. On the next corner is an old woman with pain throbbing in every fibre of her frame; under the bandage on her wrinkled face is an unsightly cancer.

How few are her benefactors! If a penny is bestowed upon her it is thrown like a bone to a dog. There is the charity of sentiment. If we give, let us give from principle and where our charity will do the most good.

(2) *Let us not give ostentatiously.* This was the fault of the Pharisees. In the court of the temple stood the *corban*, a brazen contribution-box with a trumpet-shaped mouth. As the Pharisees passed by they took pains to rattle their coins into it. The Lord observing it said, "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them. When thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet as the hypocrites do, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee." It is certain that Jesus gave much out of his humble possessions for the relief of the poor; but observe that it is not recorded that he ever gave a penny. Newspaper charity *has* its reward; but those who give most wisely do not advertise it.

(3) *Let us not give indiscriminately.* When the mendicant stretches out his hand the easy way is to bestow an alms to be rid of him; but in this manner the gift is wasted in most cases, and we have the less to bestow on the really necessitous. To give to every solicitous beggar is to thwart the ends of true benevolence. Nor is there need of so doing. If the case be one of pressing hunger, and such as needs immediate attention, let us personally attend to it; otherwise let us make use of the organized charities which stand ready to serve us. There are more than twelve hundred such organizations in the city of New York. The "Associated Charities" has agents through whom it will investigate every case reported. Thus we

are enabled to give advisedly, and at this moment every penny should be made to tell.

Finally: let us give in the spirit of Christ. He fed the five thousand, and at the same time declared unto them the unsearchable riches of the kingdom. He was not deaf to the appeal for bread to supply the body's need, but was ever mindful that, after all, the matter of greatest importance was the welfare of the immortal soul. In a little while the body will return to dust, but the soul lives for ever and ever. It is relatively of slight importance whether the body, that will be presently carried out to the graveyard, is sleek and comely and wrapped in a satin winding-sheet, or, worn and shrunken, in a cotton shroud; the soul that dwelt therein has gone beyond the reach of the small questions of food and raiment. Was it rich toward God?

Hear, then, the word of the Master—who cared for body and soul alike; he had compassion on the multitude, crying for perishable bread but needing more the bread of which if a man eat he shall never hunger; who stands at the corner of the ways offering his precious wares to every passer by: "*Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live.*"

NATHAN HALE.

“Quit you like men.” 1 Cor. 16:13.

THE Greeks were accustomed to place the images of the gods along their streets and thoroughfares in the belief that those who looked upon them would grow to resemble them. In like manner the Romans arranged the busts of distinguished senators and emperors along the *atria* of their homes to stimulate their sons to emulate the virtues of the illustrious. The custom was a wise one. We all take our color, like the chameleon, from our conditions. We imitate the virtues or vices of those whom we contemplate, whether gods or men. The eye affects the heart. The statue of Nathan Hale, the patriotic spy, which has recently been erected in City Hall Square, New York, is a preacher of robust manhood to all who pass by. It seems to say to the multitude, There is something better than wealth or pleasure; the noblest thing in the world is to be true to principle. Quit you like men.

But who was Nathan Hale? He was born in Coventry, Conn., in 1755. His parents early taught him the truths of the Christian religion, and he conceived the hope of being a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ. With this end in view he entered Yale College at fourteen years of age, and was graduated in 1773. He was a stalwart youth, almost six feet high and well proportioned, with blue eyes, brown hair, a broad chest, and

muscular frame. His voice was low and musical. While faithful in his studies he was enthusiastic in athletic sports, a leading champion of the Yale of those days. At his graduation he carried away the Commencement prize, and, better still, he bore with him the sincere regard of all who knew him. His college pastor said, "He was the manliest youth I have ever met." By way of preparation for his future ministerial work he engaged to teach the village school at New London. One morning the post-boy brought to the village the news of the firing upon the minute-men of Lexington. It was the opening gun of the Revolutionary War. The blood of the young schoolmaster was up. At a town meeting held that day he said, "Let us march immediately, and not lay down our arms until we have secured the independence of these colonies." The rest of the story is brief, and may be told in five chapters.

I. *Enlistment.* He was one of the first to enroll himself in the Colonial Army. He donned the uniform most cheerfully. Whether it was gray or blue we scarcely know. It was but a poor uniform, at best, that our brave fathers wore.

"In their ragged regimentals
Stood the old Continentals."

The important matter is, however, that it showed which side they were on.

There is another army, enlisted in the service of Prince Immanuel. It is made up of those who believe in the fundamental truths of Christianity and are willing that Jesus Christ shall lead them in conquering the world for God. Do you, friend, believe in him? Do you believe that he suffered and died for our deliverance from sin? Do you cherish the hope that, in receiving him as

your personal Saviour, you have been received into the glory of the endless life? Where, then, is your uniform? Come out from the world and be ye separate. Quit you like men in this matter. Here is the very beginning of the Christian life: having accepted Christ, stand forth for him. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the lips confession is made unto salvation.

II. *Promotion.* It was not in the nature of things that a youth like Nathan Hale should be willing to stand idle in the ranks; he would make his patriotism tell. In company with a few comrades he rowed down the North River in the darkness of the night and seized a supply-ship from under the guns of a British man-of-war. It was a brave deed. It merited promotion, and received it. Henceforth the young soldier will be known as "Captain" Hale.

In Christ's army there are multitudes who seem to be content with a minimum of duty. It is enough, apparently, that their names are upon the roll of the church as "in good and regular standing." But there are some, the Lord be praised! who are ready to stand modestly but bravely in the front, as true as steel. If at times they are criticised for blundering, let it be remembered that those who do nothing are exempt from such criticism; but, alas! their life is one long blunder. Much can be forgiven in the life of one whose main purpose is true. The buried or ill-invested talent earns no usury: but the faithful trustee is made ruler over many things.

III. *Consecration.* A call was made at this time for volunteers for a most dangerous service. The British had seized the lower part of Manhattan Island. It was evident that they were meditating a further advance. Washington greatly desired to know their plans and purposes. The choice fell upon Nathan Hale; he entered the Brit-

ish lines in the guise of a countryman, and visited all their camps, making drawings and memoranda. He knew his life was in peril. The service required of him was one which, in case of discovery, would lead to most ignominious death ; but he did not shrink from it.

We honor the man who in the Lord's army braves the danger of criticism and the pointed finger and holds himself ready for tasks that others shrink from. A few days ago the news came to us that the Kearsarge had gone down at sea. Why did we grieve? The largest craft in our navy might sink and little be thought of it ; but the Kearsarge had done one heroic act. She was at anchor off the harbor of Cherbourg and over against her lay the Alabama, the scourge of the seas. At length out she came, and seven times round they sailed, firing broadsides into each other ; then the Alabama went down. And this is why we mourn for the Kearsarge. Some men die and the space they filled closes up before their funeral rites are celebrated. Some men live so that they are never forgotten.

" A single hour of glorious fame
Is worth an age without a name."

Do something, then, young man. Be somebody. Make your life tell, if you are a member of the church of God. He has a place for you as really as he had for William Carey, or John Howard, Hans Egede, or Allen Gardiner, or William Wilberforce. Are you willing to fill it ?

IV. *Failure.* The young spy on his way back to camp was captured. The proofs of his guilt—the diagrams of the British camp—were found in his shoes. He was bound hand and foot and kept all night under guard ; sentenced, without trial, to die at break of day. Thus his mission ended in ignominious failure.

Was it failure?

The apostle Paul desired above all things to preach the gospel in the imperial city. His wish at length was gratified. He went to Rome, but, alas ! in chains ; he passed along the Appian Way and through the streets to the Prætorian camp, where he was long a prisoner. The only opportunity he had of preaching the gospel was with those who kept guard, or were permitted to visit him ; and then he was led out beyond the walls and beheaded. Was his mission to Rome therefore a failure? "I am in trouble even unto bonds," he writes ; "yet the word of God is not bound." Of all living preachers to-day, there is not one who addresses such congregations as does St. Paul. He stands in all our pulpits proclaiming the glorious gospel of the blessed God.

"He always wins who sides with God ;
To him no chance is lost ;
God's will is sweetest to him when
It triumphs at his cost."

V. *Death.* In the early morning he was led out to die. A scaffold had been reared in Rutgers' Orchard, not far from where the statue stands. The young spy was brave as a lion ; he faced his death without a tremor ; his last words were, "I regret only that I have but one life to lose for my country." Thus he died at the early age of twenty-one. It would seem to have been an untimely death, and yet his work was done. He had finished a rounded life. The fulfilment of his dream of entering the ministry could not have bettered it. Life is not to be measured in years. There is more priceless carbon in the Kohinoor than in a wagon-load of charcoal. The little maid in Naaman's palace, who merely pointed her master

to the prophet's house, lived longer than Methuselah, with all his uneventful "nine hundred and sixty and nine years."

"It is not growing like a tree
 In bulk doth make man better be ;
 Or standing like an oak, three hundred year,
 To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere :
 A lily of the day
 Is fairer far in May—
 Although it fall and die that night ;
 It was the plant and flower of light.
 In small proportions we just beauties see,
 And in short measures life may perfect be."

Now three words of practical application.

1. *Show your colors.* The good Lord said, "Let your light shine." The other day I saw a poacher's lantern—made with an opaque slide to cut off every possible beam. Are any of us holding our lights as in a poacher's lantern? Let your light shine. Let it shine like a beacon on the headlands. There are ships far out upon the dark sea that need it for their guidance into port. There are souls waiting upon your influence. Let your light so shine that others seeing your good works may glorify God.

2. *Be ready at duty's call.* Duty is a great word. Life is not half so great. When Pompey was commissioned to take a ship-load of provisions to his starving countrymen at Rome a fierce wind arose, insomuch that all his friends besought him to delay the voyage. The words in which he replied to their solicitations are worthy to be written in gold: *Necesse est ut eam, non ut vivam ; i. e.*, "It is necessary that I shall go, not that I should live." A man can indeed get along without living, but never, never without attending to his duty. The cutting

short of life may bring us into glory, but default in duty ends our usefulness.

3. *Be steadfast.* The patriotism of young Nathan Hale may teach us all a lesson in stalwart piety. In the face of danger he did not flinch. To the very end he was a true man. Our young men are wont to revere the memory of the Chevalier Bayard, "the knight without fear and without reproach." His face was like adamant before his foe, but gentle unto tears in the presence of suffering. In his last battle his army was put to rout and he mortally wounded through the loins. He staggered on until, his strength failing him, he leaned against a tree to die. Then the Constable Bourbon, coward and apostate, came riding by; it was the hour of his triumph. He drew rein, and pointing a derisive finger cried, "Hath it come to this, O brave knight? Hath it indeed come to this? I pity thee." Then Bayard, his eye flaming in death, answered, "Thou pity me! I die for my king, but thou —! I die for my country, but thou —! I die without fear or reproach, but thou —!" and so he fell. There is no better way to die than in standing for the truth. Put on your sandals, O youth! for the fight is at short range, and the sword, like that of the ancient Roman, is no longer than a man's forearm. Put on the sandals of steadfastness, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. You follow in the footsteps of Jesus, who, under the chill shadow of his approaching death, set his face steadfastly towards the cross. Never was hero so brave as he. Be true to your convictions. Let no man despise thee. Quit thyself like a man. Be strong. Let no man take thy crown.

ST. JOAN OF ARC.

“So Esther drew near and touched the top of the sceptre.”

Esther 5:2.

IN the year 1429 the government of France was in sore extremity. The nobility, torn into many factions, yielded but a doubtful support to Charles VII., whom nobody seemed to like. The city of Orleans was besieged by the English army and its surrender seemed inevitable. In that contingency the current of all subsequent history would have been changed; for, as Dr. Arnold says, “Had the city succumbed, in all probability England would have ultimately become an appendage of France.” But God is over all things. Men, armies and governments are his puppets. He holds the strings.

So it came about that while Orleans was under siege the maid Joan was watching her flocks in the fields near Domremy, and was seeing visions and hearing voices that said, “Go to Orleans and deliver it!” She told the parish priest, who said, “How can a maid deliver Orleans? Think of the difficulties.” She answered, “I fear nothing; the voices have called me and God will clear the way.” She journeyed, over one hundred and fifty miles of territory infested by the enemy, to the camp of Captain Beaudricourt, who brought her into the presence of the Dauphin. “Gentle sir,” she said, “I am Jeanne la Chapelle. God has sent me to relieve Orleans and confirm thee on the throne.” She was subjected to a rigid examination as to

the genuineness of the voices, and it was determined, inasmuch as things had come to a desperate pass, to suffer her to have her way. She was provided with a suit of armor as white as a dove's breast, mounted upon a horse as black as a raven's plume, and presented with a banner on one side of which was the *fleur-de-lis* and on the other the name of Jesus.

Thus she set forth to the relief of Orleans. As she passed through the walled towns and encampments the number of her followers increased until she found herself at the head of a formidable army. On reaching Orleans she patiently awaited events until the morning of the seventh day, when, as the story tells, she awoke out of a troubled sleep exclaiming, "My God! the blood of my people reddens the earth. Why was I not aroused? Quick! My sword, my horse, my banner!" The French had already been attacked and were being worsted. At her appearance, however, they rallied, and fell upon the enemy with such impetuous force as to drive them in utter rout; thus Orleans was saved. The bells rang all night and *Te Deums* were chanted in the churches the next day.

The subsequent life of Joan was filled with bitter trials and disappointments, until at length she was betrayed by her own countrymen into the hands of the English for ten thousand francs. She was imprisoned in an iron cage, tried before the Bishop Beauvais and sentenced to death. In answer to all charges she answered, "I have been divinely led. The voices have not deceived me." In the margin of the record are the words *Responsio mortifera* — "The death-bearing confession."

On May 30, 1441, she was burned at the stake under the shadow of the great cathedral at Rouen. With

her last breath she bore testimony to the genuineness of the voices, and then lifting up her eyes uttered the word "Jesus," and finished her prayer in heaven. The story of her death has been invested with all manner of fables. As that an English soldier, who had vowed to cast a fagot upon the flames, on attempting to do so started back in affright at the instant when she cried "Jesus," and declared that he saw a white dove escaping from her parted lips.

It was just twenty-five years afterwards that a Court of Revision, under the authority of Pope Calixtus III., versed the original finding and cleared her of all fault. Her name came to be universally revered. When the English army, pursuing Napoleon after his defeat, passed through the villages of France with sword and torch they refrained themselves from harm in Domremy by reason of their reverence for Joan. The place of her execution in the public square at Rouen is marked by a cross in the pavement where pilgrims come to do reverence to her memory. And now, after the lapse of four hundred years, the church that sentenced her to a most painful and ignominious death is about to place her in its calendar of saints. So time, the great avenger, vindicates her memory.

It may not be unprofitable for us at this juncture to review her case. The charges against her were of witchcraft and unseemly forwardness.

I. *As to the charge of witchcraft*, it rested mainly upon her protestation respecting the voices. It is not for us to say whether or no God spake audibly to her; of this, however, we may be sure: he does not leave himself without witness to any. He speaks to his children in many ways.

1. *By an audible voice.* So he spoke to Abram in Ur of the Chaldees, saying, "Get thee out from thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house to a land which I shall show thee." So also to Moses in the desert of Midian, out of the burning bush, "I have seen the affliction of my people, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters, and I am come down to deliver them." So also in tones of thunder to the children of Israel from the flaming mountain, "I am the Lord thy God that brought thee out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me." And so to the prophet at the mouth of the cave when the wind swept over, and the crackling flames, and the earth reeled and tottered under his feet, and then the still small voice, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" It is not incredible, therefore, that God should address himself audibly to us. If it be said that the time of such communications has passed by, we may speak for ourselves but not for others. Nor may we put bounds and limits upon the power of God. He has never spoken to me in an audible voice; he may never thus have communicated with you; but it does not follow that he may not thus speak to any man.

2. *Through conscience.* In this case the communication is as real as if it were articulate. And, indeed, what is voice but vibrant air?—and is not conscience the soul a-tremble under the touch of God? It is through conscience that he convinces of sin; through conscience that he invites us to the blessedness of the spiritual life. In this manner he is constantly in communication with us. And yet, by reason of our own wilfulness, conscience is not to be relied upon as an infallible guide. The voice of the Infinite coming through a perverted medium gives

an uncertain sound. The moral sense was intended to be like a finger-board pointing to the kingdom of heaven ; but sin has turned it about so that to follow it implicitly is to lose the way. To be a conscientious man is not necessarily to be a good man.

3. *In the Scriptures.* These are the court of last appeal. If, as frequently occurs, we are in doubt respecting the judgment of conscience, we may verify it by a reference to this word of God. It is the touchstone for all thoughts and actions. A man may guess however he will respecting the points of the compass, but he never can know to a certainty, until he finds how the magnetic needle points. Dr. Holme tells of making a purchase at a shop kept by a Scotch woman in the days when paper money was at its worst. He laid a bank-note on the counter, and the shop woman took down her "bank-note detector" to test it. At length she thrust back the money, saying, "Ah, man, it winna stan' the book." So, when all is said and done, the Bible is the ultimate test. If a thought or an action "winna stan' the Book," that ends it. Conscience may go wrong, but the Scriptures are an inerrant guide. The word of the Lord through these oracles is yea and amen.

II. *As to the charge of unseemly forwardness.* The Maid of Orleans did indeed appear in most unwomanly guise as she led her army into the fray. Was this other than a womanly part, or was she justified in it?

1. The most frequent sphere of woman is doubtless *the home life*. It is safe to say that many a time, in camp and in battle, Joan would fain have been back in the meadows of Domremy or spinning at her mother's fire-side. Here a woman is at her best. Benjamin West relates that when, as a mere lad, he rudely drew the picture

of his baby sister, his mother bent over and kissed him; and "that kiss," he says, "made me." Who shall estimate the gracious influence of the faithful daughter or kind sister? "How far yon little candle throws its beams!"

2. *In society* also woman finds an important field, and many there are who misuse it. There are young women in social life whose eyes are as dangerous as those of a basilisk, whose locks are like those of the Medusa, and whose hands are as talons. Woe to any that may be ensnared thereby! But there are others, bless God! whose speech is courtesy and whose hands are kindness. When Joan of Arc went among the French soldiers she found them given to profanity, using lightly the names of all the blessed Trinity. But such was her gracious influence, as she ministered among them in her white armor, that, as the record says, "They no longer swore by the mass, but by my staff." So may a gentle woman transform and glorify, if she so pleases, the waste places of social life.

3. And there are times when the broader life of *the busy world* calls for the ministry of woman. There are multitudes of good women who, for the sake of a livelihood or under the stern call of duty, have addressed themselves to such responsibilities as are usually assigned to the sterner sex. Circumstances alter cases. When Vashti was summoned to the festal chamber by her royal spouse, who, flushed with wine, desired to make an exhibition of her charms to his revellers, it is written "she refused to come;" she preferred to sacrifice her regal honor rather than to expose herself to dishonor. But when Esther was divinely commanded to go into the same presence in behalf of her doomed people she an-

swered bravely, "I will go in unto the king; and if I perish, I perish." Which won the greater honor it would be difficult to say. But surely there are times when good women are divinely constrained to make their influence felt even in the more boisterous walks of secular life.

4. It remains, however, to speak of the broadest field: to wit—*The Church of Jesus Christ*. We are fond of quoting from Paul, "Let the women keep silence in the churches." But, alas! that we should have been so long in discovering that the silence here enjoined is not the silence of death. We remember how it is written, "I will not that a woman should teach." But we have been loth to admit that, apart from the teaching here referred to—canonical and dogmatic—there is another sort in which woman has proved herself to be splendidly efficient and wherein she has received an unquestioned blessing. The age has moreover vindicated her right to an important place in the great propaganda. The work now being accomplished in missions would have been impossible but for her participation. She has gone with her brethren to the high places of the field, as Deborah went up with Barak to Esdraelon, and in her ministries in the school, the zenana, and the hospital she has "trodden down strength."

The largest active volcano in the world is in the island of Hawaii. A heavy cloud of vapor hangs over it, glowing at night like a forest in flames. It is little wonder that its awful splendor was associated by the islanders with their infernal gods. Here was the home of the evil Pele. By her decree no woman was permitted to set foot on this mountain under penalty of death. The missionaries came, and by their preaching many were led to acknowledge the Christ. But it was hard to cut loose

from their former superstitions, dwelling, as they did, in the shadow of Pele's mountain. The hour of duty had come. Some woman must break the spell. It was Kapiolani who offered herself. On the appointed day the people were assembled to witness her formal defiance of their goddess. She approached the sacred tree of Pele and plucked a cluster of berries from it; they watched to see her fall dead, but she turned, smiled upon them, and then set her face towards the mountain path. Over fields of lava and crumbling cinders she went, and up the ragged steeps, until she reached the crag where the priests of Pele had their temple: there they stood uttering maledictions; the people looked to see her fall dead, but she turned and smiled upon them and passed on. Upward they saw her climbing, bearing in her hand the sacred berries and praying as she went; she neared the edge of the smoking crater; she lifted the spray of berries, and with the words, "I defy the wrath of Pele in the name of Jesus the Christ," she tossed it in. They looked to see her fall dead, but she turned, smiling, and began the descent. The spell of Pele was broken, and the people of Hawaii have since that day acknowledged the Christ. There have been times in history when woman has been enabled thus to render a conspicuous service which no other could do. The time would fail me to tell of those who have stood in the very van of noble reforms and in the advancement of the gospel of Christ.

In brief, the lesson of Joan's life is one of entire consecration. It was a blessed word that the virgin mother spoke to the servants at Cana, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." The restitution of all things awaits the day when the men and women of Christ shall hold themselves obedient to the heavenly voices. All things are

ready; the cross has been reared and the Sacrifice slain. All things are ready; the unspeakable gift of the Spirit has been bestowed upon us—the unction of the Holy One, the baptism of fire and power. All things are ready; the great commission has been given, “Go ye, evangelize.” From the obligation of that word there is no exemption; we are all alike included in it. When we are ready to acknowledge this obligation, and proceed to do the Master’s work, his coming will draw near. The trees of the fields shall clap their hands before him, the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the rose, and no one will thenceforth need to say to his neighbor, “Know the Lord,” for all shall know him.

THE APPEAL TO CÆSAR.

“I appeal unto Cæsar.” Acts 25:11.

WHEN St. Paul was going up to attend the passover at Jerusalem he was approached by a prophet named Agabus, who loosed the apostle's girdle and bound it on his own hands and feet, saying as he did so, “Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the man to whom this girdle belongs be bound and delivered at Jerusalem.” It was not the only intimation Paul had received of impending danger. On the shore at Miletus he had listened to the entreaties of the elders who besought him not to go up to Jerusalem, and he left them weeping there because, as they said, “they should see his face no more.” At other stations on his journey he met with the same voice of warning. His friends all believed that he was going to his death. But Paul was not the man to be scared from his duty. His mind was made up, and not for a moment would he think of turning back. To the words of Agabus, to the tears of the elders, to the entreaties of the brethren, he had but one answer: “I am ready not only to be bound but to die for the Lord Jesus at Jerusalem.”

On the eighth day of May, in the year 56, he reached his journey's end. The city was crowded with such as had come from all parts of the empire to attend the great festival. One day, not long after his arrival, as he was standing quietly in the temple court he was recognized by some of his old enemies, who straightway began to cry, “Men and brethren, help! This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people and the

law!" In a moment he was surrounded by an angry mob, who dragged him down the steps and out of the sacred enclosure—with blows, and cries of "Away with him! Away with him!"—on towards the very spot where twenty years before he had held the clothes of those who stoned the proto-martyr. But fortunately the uproar had by this time been reported to the governor of the castle, who came to the rescue with a company of Roman guards. In their hands Paul was hurried away to the fortress; the people still following with angry outcries until they reached the stairway of the castle of Antonia. Here Paul asked the privilege of addressing the multitude; and, turning about, he spoke to them in Hebrew. The sound of that sacred tongue was like oil upon the waters. Paul had never addressed so vast, so angry, or so dangerous an audience as here, but all were hushed as the tones of this greatest of living rhetoricians fell upon their ears. "Fathers and brethren, hear me!" And from that point onward they listened till he spoke of the calling of the Gentiles. This was the signal for an outbreak of renewed violence. They rent their garments and threw dust into the air. They cried, "Away with him! It is not fit that such a fellow should live!" Their anger was only allayed by the prætor's assurance that Paul should be examined by scourging and his offence be ascertained. We find him accordingly stripped and ready to receive his forty stripes save one. But just as the lash was raised he quietly demanded, "Is it lawful to scourge a man that is a Roman and uncondemned?" That was a magic word. It terrified the magistrate. There was danger of his being called in question for a flagrant violation of the imperial law, for he had laid rude hands upon the sacred person of a Roman citizen. At once his cords were untied, the

instruments of torture were removed, and the prisoner was committed to await a regular trial.

Not long after, on the discovery of a plot against his life, it was deemed advisable to remove him to Cæsarea. He was taken thither under a strong escort and confined in the prætorium. A few days later the high priest and certain members of the Sanhedrin came down from Jerusalem and brought with them a celebrated advocate, named Tertullus, to conduct the prosecution. He presented the charges in a speech of great power and dexterity, accusing the prisoner (1) of heresy, (2) of sacrilege, and (3) of treason. The case thus opened was continued from time to time, until at length, in the court of Festus, it was brought to a sudden and unexpected end. Paul saw that bribery and political influence were against him. He was weary of being beaten about from pillar to post. It was now proposed to send him back again for trial at Jerusalem. He knew full well the danger that lurked in that proposal. They had played with him long enough. He therefore arose and said: "To the Jews I have done no wrong; if I am guilty of breaking the law, or have done anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die! But if the things whereof these men accuse me are untrue no man shall deliver me into their hands. *I appeal unto Cæsar!*"

That little sentence was fraught with the issues of life and death. It changed the man's whole future. Festus was amazed at the turn which events were taking, and affronted also by the boldness of the prisoner. Gladly would he have refused the demand but it was beyond his power, for Paul was a free-born Roman. "Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? To Cæsar shalt thou go!" Thus, by the utterance of a few potent words, Paul instantly re-

moved his cause from the jurisdiction of a petty provincial magistrate to the supreme tribunal of the empire.

There is food for meditation in those words. They were among the noblest and manliest the apostle ever spoke; worthy of one who never quailed before a tyrant or bowed before a mob. There is a notion in some quarters that a man in coming to be a Christian lowers the full measure of his self-respect and independence. This, however, is so far from being true that the best definition of a Christian is "the highest style of man." When Tom Brown of Rugby, writing on true manliness, sought for the noblest illustration of his theme he found it in Jesus Christ, the ideal man. Yet did not Jesus lay down the rule, "I say unto you, Resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if any man take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also; give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away"? And how shall this be reconciled with the appeal to Cæsar?

Would it not have been more becoming in Paul, as a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus, to submit to the impositions of Festus rather than to resist them? Nay, if this interpretation were put upon the saying of Jesus it would involve not only the sacrifice of personal manhood but the overthrow of social order. To turn the other cheek to the smiter would be merely a provocation to further violence. To give to every sturdy beggar that asketh of thee would be lending a hand to indolence and to encourage professional unthrift. The Lord's words are to be interpreted in the light of their context. He had just been noting the old rule, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." This rule, he says, is not the

order of the gospel. Avenge not yourselves; be not spiteful and vindictive; resort not to the *Lex Talionis*; anticipate not the functions of the magistrates; but, as much as lieth in you, be at peace with all men.

Our Lord Jesus interpreted his command of turning the other cheek when he was undergoing a preliminary mock-trial before the Sanhedrin. Being interrogated by the high priest of his disciples and his doctrine, Jesus replied, "I have spoken openly to the world, teaching in the most public places. Why askest thou me? ask them that have heard me;" thus demanding witnesses and at least a show of judicial procedure. And when one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, "Answerest thou the high priest so?" Jesus did not turn the other cheek for a repetition of that foul and illegal blow, but he again with dignity asked for his rights. "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?" The literal interpretations of Tolstoi are forever dissipated by a reference to the holy and spotless example of dignified self-respect along with the harmlessness of a dove in the example of the Master in the crisis of his life.

A German writer says, "A disposition to reconciliation must be as strong as life and unquenchable as the immortal soul; but the act of peace should be as discriminating as the distribution of pearls. If thou canst heap coals of fire on the head of thine enemy, or serve the welfare of thy fellow men, then mayest thou literally turn the other cheek. But if thy wheat would fall among the hemlock thou wouldst better keep it for the more propitious soil, and stand upon thy rights!"

I. *Paul was here defending his life.* All that a man hath will he give for his life. Why not? 1. *It is not*

our own; it is God's breath in our nostrils, coming from him and to return to him. Our prime duty is, therefore, to protect it. When Brasidas was wearied with fleeing from his foes, and had cast himself upon the earth in utter despair, he reached into his wallet for dry figs and was bitten by a mouse. "My Hercules! A miserable mouse will defend its life, and shall not I?" Thus he plucked up courage and sped on. 2. The life which is thus entrusted to us as a divine inheritance *is not to be thrown away*. Suicide is worse than homicide, for to blood-guiltiness it adds the shame of utter cowardice. In these times of anxiety and suffering there are many who, rather than endure the ills they have, prefer to flee to others that they know not of.

"For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely :
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin!"

3. But life *is only valuable for what can be crowded into it*. Life must be appraised in terms of duty. And the point is sometimes reached where duty demands the surrender of life. Our Lord was careful to expose himself to no unnecessary danger. He frequently escaped out of the midst of his enemies and went his way because his hour was not yet come. But at length, under the shadow of the olive trees on Gethsemane, he said to his pursuers, "Whom seek ye?" "Jesus of Nazareth." "I am he." Then was he led as a lamb to the slaughter; as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. Let it be observed, however, that this was not a mere aimless or despairing non-resistance; it was with a definite purpose: he chose to endure the buffetings and contradictions of a sinful world in order that he might

accomplish the glorious work of redemption. He saw afar off the fruit of the travail of his soul.

II. *Paul was here standing for his rights as a man.*

It is much to be feared that there are too many Christians who, suffering wrong without resistance, imagine themselves to be in this the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus. It may well be asked of them, Who hath required this at your hands? This is not the spirit of Jesus but rather of Shylock, who said :

“Many a time and oft
In the Rialto have you rated me ;
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug,
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.”

But sufferance is not the badge of the fellowship of Christ. The church has taken up arms again and again in righteous self-defence, and points with honorable pride to the record of the Vaudois, the Puritans, the Covenanters, the Huguenots, the Beggars of Holland, who fought for Christ's crown and covenant, and adventured all in defence of their personal rights.

We are, indeed, required to be meek ; but there is meekness and meekness. There is the meekness of Uriah Heap, who was proud of being 'umble as Diogenes was proud of his rags. There is the meekness of Moses, who slew the Egyptian task-master, who whipped Pharaoh into submission to the divine will, and whose eyes flashed fire as, coming down from the mountain, he saw the multitudes dancing in mad orgies round the golden calf.

No better definition of humility could be found than that of John Milton : “It is that lofty lowliness of mind which is exalted by its own humiliation.” It is the very opposite of servility. It is quite consistent with personal

dignity and independence. Paul reckoned himself the least among all saints, yet was he not willing to be molested in his rights unless he saw a suitable compensation for it. All night long he lay in the prison at Philippi, his feet in the stocks, his back smarting from the scourge. In the morning the mayor, alarmed by the earthquake, would fain have dismissed him; but Paul said, "They have beaten us openly and cast us into prison, and now will they thrust us out privily? Nay, indeed; we are Roman citizens; let them come themselves and fetch us out." Would to God there was more of this self-respecting spirit of manhood in the church of Jesus Christ!

III. *The key to the problem is here*: the right of self-defence ends where the duty of self-sacrifice begins; and the duty of self-sacrifice begins at the point where, by surrendering, we serve our fellow-men. We are debtors to all men. To do good is our supreme privilege. For that all rights are waived and all prerogatives must stand aside. When the cross beckons the word comes, "Put up thy sword into the sheath." It is written that Jesus emptied himself for us. He laid aside his diadem, his royal purple, the homage of the angelic host; he turned not his back from smiting, nor his face from spitting, but became obedient unto death for us. Let that mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

The spirit of Paul is manifest in his position respecting meats offered to idols. An idol was nothing at all to him, and what mattered it whether the meat upon his table had been previously laid upon a pagan altar? But there were others, whose consciences were weak and who, partaking, might be tempted away from their fealty to Christ. So said Paul, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world standeth,"

That was a glorious declaration of independence. A man may indeed stand upon his rights, but for a Christian the supreme right is to surrender all for others. In this he best quits himself like a man.

The last appearance of Paul at the Cæsarean court was on the occasion of King Agrippa's visit. He was brought to the audience-room in chains to display his eloquence. He told again the story of his conversion: "At mid-day, O king, I saw a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun;" the story that Paul was always glad to tell. He announced his calling to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light. So earnest was he that Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning hath made thee mad." He answered, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth," and thereat he turned to Agrippa, saying, "I know that thou believest." The king evaded the thrust with an equivocal jest: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Was there ever courtesy greater than that of Paul's reply: "I would to God, O king, that not only thou, but all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am," and raising his fettered hands he pathetically added, "except these bonds"! At the conference which followed it was decided that Paul might have been set at liberty had he not appealed to Cæsar. But it was too late. So to Rome he went, and there, during two years in the Mamertine prison and Prætorium camp, he served God in the preaching of the glorious gospel. Then the end came. He was ready. "I have fought a good fight," said he; "I have finished my course; I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown

which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day."

The Lord make us faithful, that we too may finish our course with joy! Let us acquit ourselves as true men; permitting none to take our crown, none to despise us; accounting it our highest privilege to surrender all in behalf of our fellow-men; for we are not our own, we are bought with a price; not silver and gold, but the precious blood of Jesus, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Wherefore let us glorify God in our body and in our spirit which are his.

THE CROWN OF THORNS.

“And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! Matt. 27:28, 29.

OUR Master is a King. He walks through Scripture with a regal step. The prophets announce him as the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” There is a foregleam of his glory in the sanctuary service: “Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and let the King of Glory enter in!—Who is this King of Glory?—The Lord of hosts, he is the King of Glory.” As the time draws near it is the King’s herald who goes before him, crying, “Prepare ye, prepare ye the way; One cometh whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose.” On his way to the holy city a multitude go before him, bearing palm branches, casting their garments in the way, and crying, “Hosanna! hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!” He was cut off in the midst of his days by an ignominious death; but those who prepared the superscription for his cross wrote better than they knew: “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the whole Israel of God.” Years passed, and the patriarch of the apostolic circle dreamed in Patmos: “I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst one like unto the Son of man, clothed in the garment of a royal priest, and girt with a golden

girdle ; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. His eyes were like flaming fire ; his voice was as the sound of many waters ; and upon his vesture and thigh a name was written, King of kings and Lord of lords !”

But the glory of the eternal King was laid aside when he took flesh upon him. There was no halo about his head, he wore no regal purple, but was simply a man among men. So disguised was he that, as it is written, “There was no form nor comeliness in him, nor any beauty that men should desire him.” In the time of the Saxon extremity Alfred the Great made his way into the Danish camp in the guise of a strolling harper, and so disported himself among the rude soldiers with merry jest that the camp was filled with laughter ; but all the while his heart was full of hostility and his eyes were taking note of the strength and position of his enemies that he might destroy them. The King of heaven came down and dwelt in disguise among us, but there was no bitterness in his heart. He came not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

To-day we behold the King crowned with thorns and decked with ribald purple ; his cheeks are crimsoned with blows and buffetings. He who through all eternity had been familiar with the homage of angels and archangels was now greeted with mock obeisance, and the derisive cry, “All hail, King of the Jews !” He, who in the beginning sat upon the circle of the universe and called into being the things that are out of the things that were not, wields as his sceptre an impotent reed. The stars of heaven had adorned his diadem ; now his brow is encircled with a crown of thorns and blood trickles over his face. Behold the man ! And this was done in the house of his friends.

O ye pitiless Jews! what if ye had known that every knee in heaven and earth should one day bend in reverence before him? O ye Roman guards! what if ye had known that presently all the thrones of the Cæsars were destined to go down in fire and blood before him? O jealous God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! how long wilt thou suffer shame to be put upon him? Draw thou the veil for but a moment and let these eyes that insolently glare upon thy well-beloved be blinded with a vision of the glory which he had with thee before the world was! O thou co-eternal Son of the eternal God! to what purpose dost thou abase thyself? We have sinned and thou art scourged! We have disrobed ourselves of truth and goodness and thou art clothed in robes of dishonor! We have smitten thee and thou art smitten for us! For us thou art made a by-word and a laughing-stock! Behold the man!

Not only in the shameful past was Jesus crowned with thorns, but now also in this waning century, and after he has been preached nigh two thousand years, our Lord is crowned with thorns and put to shame in the house of his friends.

I. We put our Lord Jesus to shame by our *half-heartedness*. "My son, give me thy heart," is his demand, and we give him half. He is dishonored by the offering of a divided life. No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. The thing is impossible and absurd, and yet we are ever attempting it. When the Czar of Russia came to visit Queen Victoria the keys of London were presented to him at Temple Bar, and with them the freedom of the city. He might go where he would. The old Tower, and Westminster, and all the pal-

aces and all the thoroughfares were his. So when our King comes the keys must be handed over. Alas! if passing up and down through our hearts he shall knock here and there at a chamber door to find it closed against him. Is it here that we keep our cherished idols? Is it here that we go to fondle our darling sin? Oh, friends, let us be one thing or the other. Let us crown our Redeemer with our purest homage or spare him the contumely of the thorns. No cast-off purple for him. If we cannot give the ermine, let us forbear to mock him with a worn-out garment. All or nothing for the King'

"Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee;
 Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of thy love;
 Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for thee;
 Take my voice and let me sing always, only, for my King;
 Take my lips and let them be filled with messages from thee;
 Take my silver and my gold—not a mite would I withhold;
 Take my moments and my days, let them flow in endless praise;
 Take my intellect and use every power as thou shalt choose;
 Take my will and make it thine; it shall be no longer mine;
 Take my heart, it is thine own; it shall be thy royal throne;
 Take my love, my God; I pour at thy feet its treasure store;
 Take myself, and I will be ever, only, all for thee!"

II. We dishonor Christ by *worldly conformity*. It was said in the olden time, "Israel shall abide alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations." To this end God secluded his people in Palestine as in a closet, walled in by mountains on the north, the desert on the south, the high cliffs to the east of Jordan, and westward the great sea. And when they were driven out of Palestine he kept them still a peculiar people. To this day Israel is singular among the nations, like the Gulf-stream flowing through the mighty deeps. "Be ye separate" is his word to us. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy

nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

There is a line, real, yet invisible as the tropics, dividing between the world and the people of God. On the one hand there is danger that we may make artificial distinctions, and draw the line where God never intended it to be; on the other, we are constantly tempted to obliterate the boundary and adjust our lives to the methods of the world. Just where is the line of separation? At sin. Sin is the danger line. God help us to keep ourselves from passing it. He who cherishes sin in any form is sure to be defiled by it. To rest one's head in Delilah's lap is to be shorn of one's locks, sooner or later, and to be set grinding at the mill in Dagon's temple. To pitch one's tent toward Sodom is to be inevitably drawn into complicity with ungodliness and to share in the misfortune of the doomed city. To warm one's hands, like Peter in the high priest's palace, at the fire which the enemies of Christ have kindled is foolhardiness which too often ends in the denial of the Lord. Our safety lies in total abstinence. Touch not, taste not, handle not the unclean thing.

III. We subject our Lord to scorn by *pharisaic exclusiveness*. "One family we dwell in him." His prayer was that "they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." From this we proceed to argue for church union; for the obliteration of denominational lines. It is not denominationalism, however, that dishonors the Saviour in these days. On the other hand, the denominations which are founded upon the sound principle of difference of opinion in non-essentials were

never so kindly disposed towards each other. There is no quarrel among the denominations. No, no. The thing we want is not church union, but Christian union. We need to feel that all members of the great family are one in Jesus Christ. There is no room for either churches for the rich or churches for the poor. The very suggestion of caste in this fellowship must give a stinking savor in the nostrils of God. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, and one Father of us all.

It is said that the "Avenue Churches" have no welcome for the poor. I do not believe it. But there is nowhere in the wealthy churches so much of the spirit of kinship as there should be. We speak of the evangelization of the "lapsed masses" and of the "unchurched multitudes," but we are too willing to farm out this work of evangelization to the Salvation Army and kindred bodies, "whose methods," as we say, "are better adapted to it." But do we remember that our Lord Jesus paid special attention to these multitudes? He came to seek and to save the lost. He went up to Sychar, to speak with a woman of the town. He went up to the land of the Gadarenes, to save a demoniac who was feared by all. He suffered a repentant courtesan to anoint his feet. The last thing he ever did was to save a pariah; and he went back to his eternal glory leading by the hand a penitent thief. The servant is not greater than his lord; nor better than his lord; nor more respectable than his lord. Let the mind that was in Christ Jesus be also in us.

IV. We dishonor Christ by our *melancholy*. We are indeed born to trouble as the sparks do fly upward; but in this we are no more unfortunate than other men, and there are some things which ought to make us very happy if we are the children of God: 1. He knows. He

is aware of all the burdens that rest upon us. He sitteth as a refiner of silver, so that no trial is permitted to come upon us beyond what we are able to bear. 2. All things work together for good to them that love him; our tribulation worketh for us the peaceable fruits of righteousness, if we are exercised thereby. That is to say, they perfect our character. The perfume comes from the bruising of the herb; the splendor of the diamond from its grinding. 3. These light afflictions, which are but for a little while, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Glory! A mule-driver in the army of Alexander, finding that his beast of burden was wearied with the bags of the king's treasure, laid them on his own shoulders and carried them for a time, until he also bowed beneath them. The king, who had been noting this, said, "Man, be of good courage; bear the burden to thy tent, for it is thine own!" His own? How every weary sinner took new strength from that word! Our sorrows are the earnest of an endless glory. We can bear them bravely to our tents. Why should our countenances be cast down when we are the children of the King, and all the delights of heaven are before us?

V. Our *formalism* is an offense to the Lord. Once it is said God laughed. It was when the kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers took counsel together, saying, "Let us break his bands asunder and cast away his cords from us." Once it is said that he was affected with nausea. It was when his people were keeping up the form of outward worship while their heart was not in it: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of beasts. Bring no more vain oblations; your incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons

and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with them; I am weary to bear them."

Let us take heed and beware of lip service—that veneering of piety which called down upon the Pharisees the indignant reproach, "Ye are as whited sepulchres, fair without, but within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness." Oliver Goldsmith said, "I take my shoes from my shoemaker, my coat from my tailor, and my religion from my priest." The father of the poet Shelley used to say,

"At church on Sunday to attend
Will serve to make the world your friend."

This is the sort of empty show that puts our divine Lord to an open shame. It is a weariness unto him; he cannot away with it.

VI. We affront him by our *cowardice*. In the judgment hall that day there must have been some who loved him—who were called his disciples. There must have been some who had felt his healing touch. Why did they utter no word of protest when they saw him decked out in those fantastic robes—when the soldiers knelt before him in mock obeisance? Why did they not cry out, "Take heed! This is the holy One of God"? That would have involved them in like danger with him; but death is preferable to a silence which makes us accessory with sin.

"Add to your faith *virtus*," said the apostle Paul; that is, the courage of a Roman knight. We are to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. The proclamation of Gideon to his army at the well of Harod rings out this day louder than ever: "Whosoever is afraid, let him arise and depart early from the camp." The Lord's host is enveloped in the smoke of battle. Ye that

are men, now serve him. Let us not fear to stand up for Jesus—to confess his love in the world's presence. Let us not shrink from the duty of rebuking sin and warning the ungodly to flee from the wrath to come. The service of our Lord is not a dress parade. We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers. Therefore, quit you like men. The call is for Daniels, who shall pray at their open windows in defiance of royal edicts. The call is for witnesses like those of Smithfield and the Inquisition, who sang the *Gaudeamus* while their flesh was hissing in the flames. The call is for a braver ministry and a more fearless body of believers, who shall lift up their voices in every judgment hall and tear the beggar's purple from the King; who shall cry, "All hail!" with voices so clear that every hostile sword shall leap from its scabbard to give them welcome into the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ. Are you afraid? Drag your fears to the altar, as Elijah did the prophets of Baal, and slay them before God!

VII. We put dishonor on our blessed Lord by our *indifference to his work*. The command is, "Seek ye first of all the kingdom of God." That means that our supreme concern must be for the conversion of souls. "Go ye, evangelize." But how can we, when every moment is consumed in secular tasks? How can we, when our utmost endeavor is needed for the toil that keeps soul and body together? Ah, friends, the trouble lies not there. I have stood beside a weaver at his loom and noted his interest in conversation, while all the while the shuttle flew to and fro and the pattern was forming in the fabric. A man can look to food and raiment and still be intent upon the affairs of the kingdom every hour of the day. William Carey sat in his cobbler-shop in North-

amptonshire with lap-stone on his knee hammering for a livelihood. But on the wall beside him hung a map of the world—and his heart was above his shop. He was ever hearing his Master's word, "Go ye." His heart was in far-off India, and while cobbling shoes he was bringing the Hindoos into the light of God. In like manner our first interest should be in the service of our Lord. There is such a thing as an active Christian life; an unreserved Christian life. Do we know it? Have we attained unto it?

But though we thus speak, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you. It is right that the average Christian should have credit for desiring to live a holy and consistent life. We are all alike, however, in falling short of the glory of God. Paul said, "I count not myself to have apprehended;" but he added, "this one thing I do: forgetting the things which are behind I reach forth unto those which are before, and press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus!" Let us be loyal to our King. And let us ever remember that he is King of kings! Write it in your counting-room. Write it above your family altars. Write it on your hearts. The Lord is King! If he must needs wear a crown of thorns and a cast-off robe, let Pilate's soldiers put them on. Stand thou aside in loyal grief. Be true to the Lord Christ! For thou shalt yet behold him in the clouds of heaven and all the holy angels with him. Keep thyself in readiness for the strewing of the palm fronds and the cry, "Hosanna! hosanna! to the Son of David. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

GOOD OUT OF NAZARETH.

“Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” John 1:46.

AND why should not a good thing come out of Nazareth? It was a town so beautiful for situation as to be called “a pearl in a casket of emeralds.” It stood in a fruitful valley in the Galilean highlands, encircled by a belt of rounded hills. In the foreground were gardens enclosed by cactus hedges, with here and there a pasture or a grainfield, or a grove of venerable olive trees; beyond, beyond, and yet beyond, were the everlasting mountains: the long range of Carmel, traversed by the shadows of the hurrying clouds; Gilead, with its rugged limestone cliffs; Hermon, crowned with a green garland and towering aloft like Saul among the prophets. If the religion of nature were sufficient for the wants of the human soul, surely those who lived in the midst of this quiet beauty of the valleys and this sublime glory of the mountains should have been distinguished for holy character. But, alas! the sweetest homilies of nature are vain as the tinkling of cymbals, unless the eyes of the spirit are opened to look through nature up to nature’s God. So it happened that the people of Nazareth were “sinners above all the Galileans.” To be a Nazarene was to be a pariah. The name was a hissing and a byword. The words of Philip were a proverb: “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” It was now to receive an extraordinary answer in the person of Jesus; for he, the chiefest among ten thousand and the one alto-

gether lovely, whose character was light and in whom was no darkness at all, was a dweller in that despised town. He, the root and offspring of David, was indeed a root out of dry ground. In this it would appear that God intended to bring together heaven's glory and earth's deepest guilt, and to set forth his power to make the desert blossom as the rose.

It was a fair question: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" And it was a fair answer: "Come and see." See what? The best thing that earth or heaven ever looked on—Jesus of Nazareth; in whom is formulated this truth—that *a man is not the creature of circumstances*. As Macaulay says, "The mark of true greatness is to prove one's self superior to circumstances and to conquer one's environment." God is stronger than the prince of darkness. Good is higher than evil. Out of the eater comes forth meat; out of the strong comes forth sweetness. In the mire of Nazareth grows and flourishes the spotless lily of character.

There are many reasons why Nazareth might be regarded, at first sight, as a bad place for the training of one intending to build up character and make his life tell.

I. *There was so little room.* It was shut in among the mountains. Noises of the busy world came from afar, and Nazareth seemed scarcely a part of it.

How many a youth in our country hamlets is impatient of his narrow place! What hope is there for an ambitious soul in such a pent-up Utica? Oh, to be in the roar and turmoil of the madding crowd! But there is much to be said for a cramped-up environment. The exile in Patmos, while the waves of the Ægean beat ceaselessly against that barren rock, must oftentimes have looked away towards the west, where the Roman

Christians were enduring hardship, and towards the east, where the followers of Jesus were fighting with beasts at Ephesus. As the last survivor of the apostolic circle he felt the burden of all the churches; yet here he was, "cabined, cribbed, confined." But Patmos had its uses. The heavens opened to the aged dreamer, and amid a panorama of glorious visions He that walked amid the seven golden candlesticks spake through him to all the coming ages. So Madame Guyon in the Bastile, cut off from the earnest life of the struggling church, poured out her soul unto the Lord as in a trysting-place and all God's people are grateful for her inspiring meditations. She sang:

"A little bird am I,
 Shut in from fields of air;
 But in my cage I sit and sing
 To Him who placed me there;
 Well pleased a prisoner to be
 Since, O my Lord! it pleaseth thee."

The secret of right living is, in most cases, to be useful in a narrow place. When Louis XIV. asked Colbert why, with all the resources of the kingdom, he had not succeeded in conquering Holland, "that little country by the Zuyder Zee," the answer was, "Your Majesty, these people are so much greater than their land." If our field of usefulness is narrow, let us, instead of complaining, be sure that we fill it.

II. *Nazareth was no place for an equipment.* It is not to be doubted that the boy Jesus longed many a time for the facilities which others enjoyed. There were the famous schools at Athens: the Garden, the Academy, the Painted Porch; there was the splendid University at Alexandria, where Greek and oriental culture were

taught; and down at Jerusalem were the rival schools of Hillel and Shammai. But this lad must needs remain at Nazareth—the humble cottage his university, the Old Testament scriptures his library, and Mary his only teacher, unless perchance he was permitted between whiles to attend the rabbinical school.

The ambition of the average boy of to-day is to go to college. It must not be presumed, however, that only college students are developed into thorough men. In Spencer County, Indiana, in 1816, there was a lad who was transported with delight because of an offer of six dollars a month for rowing the ferry over Anderson Creek. His first savings were invested in Plutarch's "Lives," which he read in early mornings by the light of a pine torch. He had but one year's schooling altogether, yet so well did he use his slight advantages that he became a liberally educated man; and when the time came he was chosen to steer our ship of state through the troubled waters of the Civil War.

We speak of self-made men, but all men worthy of the name are self-made. Some, however, work out their fortunes with more slender materials than others. In a recent Japanese exhibit was a pagoda carved out of ivory. It was not more beautiful than other products of oriental art, yet it attracted general attention because a patient artificer had carved it with a bent nail.

A youth, if so disposed, can find his *alma mater* almost anywhere. In the great university at On was a lad envied by his comrades because he was the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter. Here he acquired the learning of the Egyptians, but this did not furnish the working capital for his useful life. Down in the desert of Midian, watching his flocks, he found his needed curriculum.

Ah, that was a college! The great mountains, the starry heavens, long days of meditation in the still pastures—and then the burning bush, and the solitude broken by the voice of God.

III. *The Youth of Nazareth found no patronage there.* He knew his great errand. He was ever mindful of the baptism wherewith he was to be baptized, but his townsmen did not sympathize with him. Not even his brethren believed in him. There was, indeed, some confidence between him and his mother—a blessed mother's secret, but it was scarcely a matter for her to speak of. Thus the lad kept his own counsel and plodded on.

And many a soul is growing unto perfection in such unsympathetic surroundings: the heart filled with great hopes and purposes and no one to say God-speed. In a little town in Germany a lad was born with a soul for music. His father was a barber and surgeon, and had become *valet-de-chambre* to the Elector of Saxony and intended that his son should study law. The boy, with the complicity of his aunt, smuggled a poor weak-voiced spinet into his attic and there he spent the solitary hours. At eight years of age he was taken by his father for a visit to the castle of Saxe-Weissenfels. While his father was conversing with the duke he stole away to the chapel, and when they sought him there he sat upon the organ stool, like a brownie with dangling feet, in a very heaven of melody. In after years he wrote the oratorio of "The Messiah."

And thus it often is, the noblest spirits flourish in uncongenial soil. Potted plants have to be content with a small stature. Trees that must be boxed and coddled are never of much strength. But the oak takes care of itself; it grasps the rock beneath and subsidizes all the

helpful factors of the soil ; it throws out its mighty arms to winds and tempests.

“ Hurrah for the oak, the brave old oak !
 Who stands in his pride alone ;
 And still flourish he, a hale green tree,
 When a hundred years are gone ! ”

Character is bred amid the storms. Out of such Nazareths come many noble souls ; they flourish and perfect themselves amid the most adverse conditions.

IV. Still further, *Nazareth would seem to have been an uncongenial place for the training of this earnest Youth by reason of the adversities which befell him there.* He knew what poverty was, he was familiar with affliction ; for it would appear that Joseph died during this period, leaving the home desolate. Such trials, however, are greatly profitable to those who are exercised thereby.

The rough diamond cried out under the blow of the lapidary, “ I am content. Let me alone.”

But the artisan answered, as he struck again, “ There is the making of a glorious thing in thee.”

“ But every blow,” answered the rough stone, “ pierces to my heart.”

“ Aye, but after a little it shall work for thee a far more exceeding weight of glory.”

“ I cannot understand,” as blow fell upon blow, “ why I should suffer in this way.”

“ Wait,” said the lapidary ; “ what I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.” And out of all this came the Koh-i-noor to sparkle in the monarch’s crown.

After the death of Joseph the oldest son became the bread-winner. It devolved upon him to provide for the wants of the growing family. Hard work in the shop :

little outlook for ambition ; patient waiting, and wondering what this would come to. Many a youth whose small earnings go to the support of a widowed mother or other dear ones may find encouragement here. We are all interested in the "Tales of Shakespeare" by Charles and Mary Lamb, but our interest will be heightened if we can read between the lines the pathetic story which is written there. At the age of twenty-two Mary Lamb killed her mother in a sudden frenzy : from that moment Charles devoted himself, in constant self-sacrifice, to his "poor dear sister." For her sake he gave up the fondest dreams of his early manhood. When she felt the approach of her frequent spasms of insanity they would go arm in arm to Hoxton Asylum, both weeping as they went, and he carrying the strait-jacket in his hand. A hundred pounds was his annual income, and for more than forty years he affectionately shared it with her. A simple, uneventful life ; yet was there not something splendidly heroic in it ?

V. But the most disheartening among all conditions, in the little town where Jesus dwelt, *was sin*. Sin all around him. The air was filled with the discordant sounds of blasphemy and uncleanness. Yet, being in Nazareth, he was not of it. A man may indeed abide in such an environment and yet be superior ; as some one has said, a man cannot prevent an unclean bird from flying over his head, but he can prevent it building its nest in his hair.

It would appear, however, that in this case Jesus had greatly the advantage of us in that, while sin was all around him, it has invaded our nature. It throbs in our veins ; it is woven in the very nature of our being ; brain, conscience, and heart are defiled by it. Yet, even so, sin may be subsidized to our spiritual growth. Sin is not

excluded from the "all things" which by the overruling of divine providence are made to work together for good to them that love God. On the one hand, it reveals the divine character in clearest light. As we stand by the pit out of which we have been delivered we perceive God's love in the stretching out of his hands towards us; his holiness, in the immolation of his own Son for the satisfaction of righteous law; his justice, in that he could not forgive without such expiation; his wisdom, in the devising of a scheme so simple and yet so glorious as that of Calvary; and his omnipotence, in that hereby he is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto him. In sin itself there is nothing good, but in the overruling of sin there is a great fruitage of spiritual profit. No doubt the mother of Bartimeus mourned over the blindness of her child, but the time came when that blindness, like an angel, led him to the wayside when Jesus passed by, and won for him the ministry of healing. Then on a sudden his eyes were opened to the glory of the hillsides and of the heavens above, and, more wonderful still, to the beauty of the face of the well-beloved Son of God.

Then, too, by the overcoming of sin we magnify our ultimate triumph. When Pompey returned from his eastern conquests there was a line of barbaric kings who, in chains, were dragged at his chariot wheels. Thus at the last we shall come to heaven's gate dragging our lusts and passions and vanquished habits in chains. Great are the rewards offered to "him that overcometh:" a white stone with a new name written thereon, access to the tree of life in the midst of paradise, a place upon the throne beside the King!

Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Come and see. In Jesus behold the answer, and in all who faith-

fully follow him. There are multitudes of noble men and women who have come out of Nazareth strengthened by adversity and made perfect through suffering. Lift up your eyes and see. All heaven is full of souls redeemed out of Nazareth. "And I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and with palms in their hands. And one of the elders said unto me, Who are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne; and they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them unto fountains of living waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

THE RESURRECTION HERE AND NOW.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.” John 5:25.

OUR Lord was no respecter of persons. He came to seek and save the lost. He instructed the Rabbi Nicodemus and called into his service the publican Matthew from the receipt of customs. The rich and learned have souls to be saved. Indeed there is reason to suspect that sages and millionaires are spiritually the most neglected people on earth. But the Lord went out after them; and he sought the poor and ignorant as well. By the sheep-market was the pool of Bethesda, whose porches were filled with the blind and withered and halt. He walked among them with infinite compassion. There was one poor sufferer who had been bound in palsy thirty and eight years. Thirty and eight years of pain and weariness and hoping against hope! And Jesus said to him, “Wilt thou be made whole?” Would he! “Aye, Master; but when the waters are troubled I have none to put me in.” Jesus said, “Arise, and walk.” And straightway he arose and went his way. It was a blessed deed; but, alas! it was wrought on the Sabbath day. The Pharisees were offended because he had broken one of their most stringent laws. He justified himself in these words: “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” By this

they were angered the more, because "He made himself equal with God." He went on to show his oneness with the Father; how all his works were by the Father working through him. And what were these? The opening of blind eyes, and the wiping away of leprosy and the healing of a few paralytics. These were but slight tokens of the divine energy as compared with the mighty works which were presently to be accomplished by the Father working through him. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life; he shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."

He was now addressing the Pharisees on their own ground. They believed in the resurrection of the dead. In this they were at odds with the Sadducees, who rejected all things supernatural. Were not the Scriptures full of this glorious doctrine? Had not the earliest of the patriarchs said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in my flesh I shall see God"? Had not David sung, "God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave"? Had not other prophets seen wondrous foregleams of it; as when Ezekiel stood in the midst of the valley of vision and saw, everywhere, the scattered bones, and, lo, they were very dry. And a voice said, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And the prophet answered, "Lord, Thou knowest." And the voice said, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these men, that they may live." And they stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army. The Pharisees believed in the Scriptures, and, therefore, they believed in the resurrection of the dead.

But here was something different. "The hour cometh, *and now is.*" The reference is to something which is going on here and now—a spiritual resurrection; the coming forth out of darkness into light, and out of bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God. The same truth was set forth by our Lord in comforting Martha for her brother's death. He said unto her, "Thy brother shall rise again." And Martha said, "I know that he shall rise again, in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

I. *Sin is death.* This is the most dreadful of the many figures under which it is represented. It is spoken of as bondage; for he that doeth sin is the servant of it. As exile; the sinner is in the far country, far from home and kindred and happiness, wasting his substance in riotous living. It is debt; I owe ten thousand talents, and, alas! am bankrupt. We are all alike concluded (*i. e.*, imprisoned) under sin. We are in the debtor's jail, and shall not come out thence until we have paid the utmost farthing. It is defilement: for in the last reduction—woe to us who outwardly seem so clean and wholesome—sin is filth, a foul disease that robs us of our self-respect and makes us unpresentable before God and men: as it is written, "From the crown of the head unto the soles of the feet, there is no soundness, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores."

But, worst of all, sin is spiritual death. Not that the sinner has no semblance of life, but all the faculties and powers of his higher nature have lost their vigor. He has a name to live, but is dead. An ice-floe drifted from

the delta of the river Lena, on the northern coast of Siberia, clear across into Davis Strait. On this ice-floe was the body of one of the crew of the ill-fated *Jeannette*. If this man had come by the shortest route he had made a journey of three thousand five hundred miles; if by the longest, almost seven thousand. A long journey for a dead man! Yet there are men all around us, dead as to their higher natures, performing all the functions of common life. They toil in our workshops and offices; they eat, drink, marry, and are given in marriage; they accumulate wealth, sit in places of authority, and yet are dead in trespasses and sins. This is not a mere figure. The death of the spiritual nature, in such cases, is awfully real; and, unless there be a real resurrection, the end must be eternal death.

II. *Salvation is renewal of life.* "I am come," said Jesus, "that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly." At his touch the soul is quickened from the dead. He who stood at the grave of Lazarus, and said "Come forth!" with such power that the shrouded dead arose, is able in like manner to restore those who are under the mortal sentence of the broken law. Was it wonderful that Lazarus should come forth? It is far more wonderful that the word of Jesus Christ should have power to restore the functions of a soul buried in spiritual darkness.

1. *The eyes of the soul are opened at his touch.* It is a sore calamity to be blind in this beautiful world of ours. A child who was thus afflicted from her birth was healed by a surgical operation. The time came for the removal of the bandage from her eyes. She was taken out upon the piazza of the summer home and her newly-opened eyes fell upon the meadow and the hillsides and the skies

above; then she said, "Oh, mother! is this heaven?" To many a soul a like revelation of moral beauty has come when, at the touch of Jesus, sight has been restored, and God and life and immortality and all the glorious truths have come into view. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. They are nothing to the natural man. He is concerned about food and raiment and wealth and honor and pleasure; but the real things of eternity are practically unknown to him till Christ says, "Receive thy sight." Then all heaven bursts upon his vision, and he can say, of a truth, "Whereas I was blind, now I see."

2. *At the touch of Jesus our ears are unsealed.* To be physically deaf is a great misfortune. The entire range of hearing is only seven octaves. If a sound does not make more than forty or less than four thousand vibrations to the second we cannot hear it. The infinite range outside of that narrow limit is all beyond our sphere. I know a man who has never heard the song of a bird, and who is, therefore, skeptical as to the sweet descant of the nightingale's voice. To him the music of the feathered songsters is, like the "music of the spheres," a mere fable. How much of life's pleasure is unknown to him! But the spiritual deafness of the spiritually dead is absolute. The Apostle says there are so many voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. God is ever speaking to the soul, the song of angels is all about us, the great multitude of the redeemed are testifying to the divine goodness. All this is outside the aural range of those who are dead in trespasses. But when the Lord comes, and utters the magic word *Ephphatha*, the ears are unstopped, and the great truths come home with unspeakable sweetness to the soul. The

things that made no impression are now of the utmost moment. God's promises and warnings, his sweet assurance of forgiveness, the confidences of Christian fellowship, the anthems of the redeemed in glory, are as real to the redeemed soul as the rippling of the brook or the roll of thunder to the natural man.

3. The life-giving touch of Jesus *quickeneth the spiritual appetite*. A man said to me recently, "I haven't been hungry for two years." There are people of this sort who are taking tonics all the while to stimulate their desire for the good things of life; a considerable portion of the zest of living is lost to them. But there are other multitudes who have no appetite for the great truths of the spiritual realm. The old-fashioned Book which is meat and drink to God's children has no attraction for them. The hymns of the sanctuary, "Jesus, Lover of my soul," "Nearer, my God, to thee," "O mother dear, Jerusalem," have no melody for them. They care not for the hopes and aspirations which are dear to the Christian as the throbbing of his heart. Desire has failed. Who shall quicken it? God alone. Out in the wilderness, hunted like a partridge among the mountains, David was moved with longing for the blessed things of the kingdom. He saw a wounded deer bounding through the forest, an arrow quivering in its flank, its eyes hot with fever, hastening towards the fountain. "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks," cried the Psalmist, "so panteth my soul after thee, O God! My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" Thus are the deep longings of the soul quickened in divine communion. Alas! for those who have no hunger for the living bread! Alas! for those who thirst not for water out of the deep wells of salva-

tion! There is no sweeter beatitude than this, "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." They shall be satisfied with grapes and pomegranates from the King's garden. They shall quench their longing with water out of the King's well.

4. In this spiritual resurrection the *conscience is vivified*. It was God's purpose that our consciences should point us along the way to the endless life, but by persistence in sin they are seared as with a hot iron. They refuse to perform their functions. The needle in the compass is rusted fast. The man congratulates himself that he can sin without scruple; he can go on in an evil course without compunction. This means that his moral sense is struck with death. In its awaking—for it must awake sooner or later—are the possibilities of eternal pain or rapture. The Emperor Constance with an untrembling hand put his brother Theodosius to death, but in his exile the wraith followed him wherever he went, holding up to him a cup of red warm blood, saying, "Drink, brother, drink!" Alas! for him whose conscience awakes thus under the awful touch of remorse; but blessed is the man whose conscience springs to life at the word of Jesus. A quick conscience is a finger-board pointing to heaven's gate.

5. *The will is energized* at the life-giving word of Jesus. The will is the centre of our moral nature. It is paralyzed by sin. The good that I would, I do not; and the evil that I would not, that I do. The beginning of spiritual life is when the will is moved towards truth and goodness. Out in the far country the prodigal in the swine field, ragged and famishing, saw visions of plenty in his father's house, and he said, "I WILL arise and go."

That was the beginning of life. The moment of conversion is when the soul, in answer to the divine summons, responds, "I will." Then begins the endless struggle, the beating down of old sins and passions and appetites. Then begins the work of the kingdom; for whereas the man who is spiritually dead has no concern for the building up of truth and righteousness on earth, the quickened soul is eager to answer the Lord's injunction, "Go, work in my vineyard." Thenceforth his highest aspiration is to make life tell, not for self-advancement, but for the glory of God.

An old-time Quaker preacher had a strange experience at his conversion. He fell asleep and dreamed. He seemed to be dead, and laid out for his burial, when a shining one came and bent over him, saying softly, "The man is dead." Then another came and laid a hand over his heart, and said, "It does not throb; he's dead." Then another came and laid a hand upon his flesh, saying, "It is cold; he is surely dead." So one by one came angels and stood around his couch, till one kindlier than all the rest came and looked upon him, lifted his hand, and said, "Nay, what is this? A nail print in his palm, and a nail print in his other palm. This man is not dead; he has been crucified! He has been crucified with Christ and lives with him!" Then the man awoke and found the place in the Scripture where it is written, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, Christ liveth in me." The secret of spiritual life is indeed to enter into fellowship with the death of Jesus. We begin to live when we stand under his cross and feel one drop of his warm blood falling upon us. "The life is in the blood." The life of every son of man is in the blood of the only-begotten Son of God. To believe in him is to come forth

out of the sepulchre into the world of beauty and gladness. Oh that we might all know the power of his death, that we might also be partakers of the power of his life! Oh that we all might be able to say in truth and sincerity, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, Christ liveth in me!"

SIMON OF CYRENE.

“And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him. And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear the cross.” Matt. 27:31, 32.

“And they compel one Simon, a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.” Mark 15:21.

“Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.” Rom. 16:13.*

It was the time of the Passover. The city was crowded with strangers who had come up from every part of Jewry to celebrate the feast. The homes of Jerusalem were thrown open. The hillsides round about were dotted with tents and leafy booths. The neighboring villages were crowded with pilgrims, who every morning betook themselves to the city that they might join in the temple service.

A Jew from Cyrene, in Northern Africa, was thus sojourning in one of the suburban hamlets. He had heard much of the Nazarene prophet, and, being a man of frank and open nature, he was in a position to discuss without prejudice the claim that He was the long-looked-for Messiah. On the successive days of this festival he had taken occasion to hear the Nazarene, and was struck with his bold and clear expositions of spiritual truth. He had

* These passages contain all that is definitely known of Simon of Cyrene. There are traditions, more or less trustworthy, which enable us, with some use of the imagination, to complete the story of his life.

been present in the temple on Tuesday of this Passover-week when Jesus had driven out the money-changers, and had witnessed the healing of the sick and the opening of blind eyes. He had discussed these things with his fellow-countrymen in the synagogue of the Cyrenians, which was their resort during the feast. So earnestly had he insisted upon a fair discussion of the claims of Jesus that he was known among them as a friend of the Nazarene. This was by no means true. He was, however, earnestly debating in his own mind whether this Jesus of Nazareth was not proving himself to be the expected Christ.

This was the state of affairs when, on the morning of April 7th, he set out from the village to go to Jerusalem. The night before, he had read, according to the custom, the story of the original Passover, and he had lain awake meditating on the events of that dreadful night. As in a dream he saw his fathers standing with the loins girt and staff in hand. He saw the sacrifice in every home, the blood upon the lintels of the doors. He heard the cry of sorrow, when all Egypt bewailed the firstborn. And then he saw the pilgrims go forth out of bondage, with faces set towards the promised land. It seemed to him like the foreshadowing of some greater deliverance to come. Why should the sacrifice be slain every year? Why should the blood be sprinkled, unless for the setting forth of some spiritual truth? Were they right who believed that all this was predictive of the coming One, in whom all sacrifices were to find their ultimate fulfillment and by the shedding of whose blood should come the remission for the people's sins?

As he pursued his way towards the city, still engaged in these reflections, his attention was arrested by the

sound as of a turbulent multitude, the trampling of many feet, and confused cries. Now he heard more clearly. "Crucify him!" they shouted; "Away with him!" "Away with him!" He saw a great company issuing from the city gate. In front rode a centurion, followed by a detachment of Roman guards. Then came three malefactors bearing crosses, each guarded by a quaternion of soldiers. Two of these prisoners he recognized as well-known criminals who had long been awaiting death; but the third! Could this be the Nazarene? He was covered with dust and stained with blood, haggard from a long night of derision and suffering; from his neck hung a *titulum* on which was written, *Jesu Nazaret, rex Judæorum*. While the Cyrenian stood gazing, this prisoner staggered and fell beneath his load. In vain he struggled to rise. The soldiers in charge were impatient to be on their way.

At this moment the eyes of someone who had met Simon in the synagogue fell upon him, and a cry was raised, "A friend of the Nazarene! Lay the cross upon him!" The Romans were but too willing. A dog of a Jew, a foreigner, and a friend of the Nazarene! Enough. They seized upon him. His struggles were in vain; the heavy beams were laid upon his shoulders, and forward they pressed. The heart of Simon was filled with bitterness under this injustice; but, as they were hurried on amid the cries of the mob, he observed the patient sufferer at his side, and his spirit was calmed within him. There was no opportunity for words; but he saw upon the face of the Nazarene a look of tender regard and solicitude which strangely touched him. The heavy burden now seemed light. Was he not bearing it for Him?

It struck him as surprising that, amid all this multitude, there were none who seemed to sympathize with Jesus. Where were his friends? his disciples? Where were the blind whose eyes he had opened? By the way-side, yonder, as they passed, a group of women, beating on their breasts, gave way to bitter cries and lamentations. He turned, with a look full of prophetic vision, and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for yourselves and for your children. The hour of calamity cometh, when Jerusalem shall go down in fire and blood." Oh, had they but known! Crosses were presently to stand all around this circle of surrounding hills!

On went the surging crowd, breaking forth in shouts of cruel mockery. Even the malefactors at his side derided him, saying, "Thou the Christ! The Messiah of Israel!" Simon held his peace. But slowly it came to him that here might be something more than human patience. His heart was filled with a great sorrow for this poor sufferer left to tread the wine-press of his shame and anguish all alone. Might it be that, under this guise of humility, the promised One of God was going to his sacrifice? Might it be that all the shadows of the Old Economy were to be fulfilled on this day of the Passover? On they went; along the way which henceforth would be known by reason of this sad journey as *Via Dolorosa*; on toward the place of execution. They reached the rounded knoll, and Simon awoke from his wondering as the cross was lifted from his shoulders and placed upon the earth. By order of the centurion the prisoner, unresisting, lay down upon it. A rough soldier stood forth, hammer in hand; another held a nail above the open palm; at the word the hammer fell; a look of anguish

fell over the face of the Nazarene ; a low cry escaped him : " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do ! " The man of Cyrene in that moment felt the conflicting torrents of doubt and conviction surging through his brain. He could bear no more, but, no one hindering, turned and fled—fled to a solitary place on a neighboring hill, where he fell down upon his face and agonized in prayer : " Oh, God of my fathers, give me to see the truth ! "

How long he lay there he knew not, but when he arose darkness had enveloped him. In the distance he saw three crosses outlined against the twilight sky. He turned and made his way homeward. All that night he sat poring over a parchment scroll. He read again the story of the Passover. He searched out the Messianic prophecies. At length he came to the place where it was written : "*For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground ; he hath no form nor comeliness ; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we shall desire him. He is despised and rejected of men ; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief : and we hid as it were our faces from him ; he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows ; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way ; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*" And in that moment it flashed upon him. The prophecy was clear as day. The man who had gone so unresistingly to Golgotha was the Passover Lamb, of whom it was writ-

ten: "He shall be led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." This was the voice of the blood flowing over the altars of the olden time. This was the voice of the blood sprinkled upon the lintels of the doors. He fell upon his knees in gratitude, murmuring, "Thou hast laid on him the iniquities of us all."

* * * * The years passed. Simon grew old and died in the triumphant hope of the Gospel. In his native city was a Christian church. His wife still lived there, a sweet-spirited woman whose heart was love and whose hands were ministries of mercy. Of his two sons, Alexander had met a martyr's death, but Rufus was the devoted pastor of the church. The people of Cyrene were wont to speak gratefully of Simon's faith and courage and charity. His name was held in fragrant remembrance. His memory was a benediction upon all who had known him.

Is there anything for us in the brief story of this uneventful life?

I. There is great virtue in walking with Jesus, and all the more if we walk with him towards Golgotha. Communion is a magic word. There never was a voice like that of Jesus. There never was a touch like his. The hem of his garment has healing virtue in it. If he talk with us as we journey our hearts burn within us; but if he hold his peace, and utter not a word, yet is there a great blessing in being with him. To walk with Jesus is the secret of a holy, happy life.

II. There is a double virtue in suffering for him. As the Cyrenian bore that cross it must have brought a feeling of submission—nay, we want a stronger word—of joyous acquiescence to reflect that it was Jesus' cross that

he bore. His pain must have become as sweet as pleasure for Jesus' sake. A great multitude have, for their loyalty to the gospel and to the name of Jesus, faced the pointed finger and the gleaming sword, and these are they who, coming up out of the great tribulation, stand nearest to the throne in heaven; and they have palms in their hands; and they sing, "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever." And for their shame they have a thousandfold of honor, and for their suffering they are led to living fountains of waters. Here is a great promise: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake and the gospel, for great is your reward in heaven." In heaven? Aye, and here as well.

III. But the highest honor of all, the service *chevron*, is in the bearing of his cross. This is more than mere suffering with him. The cross of Jesus stands for a work voluntarily taken up for the sake of a sin-stricken world. To bear the cross is to enter into fellowship with Christ in this great work. To bear the cross is to help our Master deliver the world from sin. Oh! there is no joy like that. Nor is there any reward in heaven like that which awaits the cross-bearer, for "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

There was another Simon who for his devotion to the great fundamental truths of the gospel was called *Petros*—a rock. It is told of him that, in his later years, he fled from a persecution which had broken out in the city of Rome. Not far beyond the walls he met one coming,

whom he recognized, by the signs of suffering still upon him, as his divine Lord. "Master, whither goest thou?" he cried. The answer was, "I go to Rome to be crucified again." "Nay, Lord," said Peter, "I will return." A church stands to-day on that traditional spot, called *Domine, quo vadis?* It stands as a reproach to those who turn their backs on Christian service. It is a true saying, "The servant is not greater than his lord." "If any man will come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

ASSURANCE.

“Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.”

2 Peter 1: 10.

ALL the elaborate treatises which were ever written on the doctrine of Election have not served to clarify it. It has pleased God to reserve this as one of his state secrets. A stoic of the olden time used to go about holding something in his left hand covered with a napkin. Many curious glances were cast upon it, and when some Paul Pry was bold enough to inquire, “What hast thou?” the philosopher replied, “Hence the napkin.” So with respect to this divine mystery. No doubt God could have made it perfectly clear, but for some good reason he has chosen otherwise. To seek a solution of the difficulty is to have our labor for our pains.

We know that Election is a fact. “Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son; and whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” It is inconceivable that God has not always foreknown the names of the redeemed. They are said to be written of his Book of Life; but the book is sealed with seven seals and One only has been found worthy to open it.

The practical side of this doctrine lies in the fact in personal assurance. We may know whether our names are written in the Book of Life or not. It is not said that all true believers have this certainty, but only that

they may have it. A multitude of us feeble folk are vexed with questionings :

“’T is a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought :
Do I love the Lord or no ?
Am I his or am I not ?”

How may we arrive at assurance? By the mouth of three witnesses it shall be established.

I. *The witness of the Spirit.* “The Spirit beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God : and if children, then heirs : heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.”

A witness in an earthly court is not permitted to testify as to mere hearsay, nor can he advance a personal opinion ; he does not guess or speculate ; he is not like a mathematician who has a matter in hand in process of solution ; he testifies as to facts alone. So here. The Holy Ghost appears as a witness, as one who has looked into the Book of Life and is prepared to say, Your name is there.

Why should not the Spirit thus testify in the soul of the believer? Did not Jesus give assurance, again and again, to those who sought him in spiritual trouble? Did he not say to the paralytic who was let down from the house-top into the midst of the company, “Be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee”? Did he not say to the poor creature who, weary of her sinful life, sought him as he sat at meat in the Pharisee’s house and anointed his feet with precious nard, “Daughter, go in peace ; thy sins, which are many, are forgiven thee”? And when the thief upon the cross, after a life spent in ill-doing, besought him, “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom,” did he not answer, “To-day

thou shalt be with me in Paradise"? When Jesus ascended into the heavens he left his work in the hands of the Holy Spirit, who is to carry it on to its ultimate consummation. We may reasonably assume, then, that the Spirit also stands ready to speak the blessed word of assurance to those who are fit and willing to receive it.

At the time when Wesley was preaching in Georgia he was approached by a Moravian pastor, named Spangenberg, who asked him if he had the witness of the Spirit. Wesley was surprised and nonplussed. "Do you know," asked Spangenberg, "that Jesus is your Saviour?" "Aye, I know that he is the Saviour of the world; that he tasted death for all." "But do you know that he is your Saviour? that your sins are washed away? that your name is written in the Book of Life?" "I hope so." "But do you know so?" Wesley was troubled. He endeavored to solve the difficulty in prayer. He put away all things that seemed to stand between himself and God. He listened until the still small voice came, and then he wrote:

"The Spirit answers to the blood,
And tells me I am born of God."

But may there not be some mistake as to the voice? May we not be deceived by our emotions? Is there no way in which we can verify the testimony of the Spirit?

II. *The witness of the Word.* As the Scriptures are the court of last appeal in all questions of faith and conduct, so are they in respect to the genuineness of all Christian experience. A peace which rests on sentiment alone is of no value. Tears and hosannahs can scarcely be placed in evidence. To the law and the testimony therefore. What saith the Scripture?

If a twelve-inch plank be laid along the pavement from one side of the street to the other a child may walk upon it without a tremor and with no fear of falling off; but if it be laid from the top of one high building to another on the opposite side there are not many of us who would undertake to keep our balance while walking over it. There is nothing underneath it, and away goes our confidence. So of our Christian hope; it must rest on something that we can see with our eyes and handle with our hands. We must somehow get it on *terra firma*. And the Scriptures are *terra firma* for us. In this blessed volume there are many touchstones by which we can attest our assurance of salvation. Here is one: *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.* Do we believe on Jesus Christ? Have we taken hold of his atoning work with the appropriating hand of faith, so that we can say, My Lord and my God? Here is another: *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.* To be born again is to enter into newness of life. Old things have passed away; behold, all things are new—new hopes, new purposes, new ambitions and aspirations. We live now in a new atmosphere and can scarcely fail to perceive it. In the famous Tichborne case, the reason why the claimant failed to get possession of the great estate was not because of any specific evidence, but rather because the whole demeanor of the man showed that he was not of noble blood. Here is another of the touchstones: *Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.* And again: *Hereby we know that we love him, if we keep his commandments.* For Jesus is not only our Saviour, but our Lord. To acknowledge his redemptive grace and

deny his sovereignty is to lean upon a broken reed. Here is another: *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.* The fellowship of God's people is a spiritual kinship. We have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father;" so that, being sons and daughters in his household, our relations are of the closest sort. Here is another: *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and let him take up his cross and follow me.* The Crusaders wore the red cross on their arms; but a true believer wears it on his heart and bears it on his shoulders. He cheerfully takes part with his divine Lord in the great work of delivering the world from sin. Here is another: *Go, sell all that thou hast, and come and follow me.* The young ruler to whom these words were addressed was suffering his wealth to stand between him and the better life. A true believer makes a surrender of all; that is, he holds all other considerations to be secondary to the service of Jesus Christ. Here is another: *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.* Not that the Christian is perfect, but he does not persist in any evil habit. He may be betrayed into wrong-doing, but no sooner does he know his error than he repents and turns his back upon it. He does not keep the golden wedge in his tent. Here is another: *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.* To be led by the Spirit is to follow on in the paths of holy character. For the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. And here is yet another: *Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?* It is a true saying, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." A child knows whether it loves its mother. Why shall not a Christian know if he loves the Saviour who has redeemed

him? And this is a crucial test: if the believer can say thrice over, and with all his heart, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee," all is well.

So, then, we need not go on singing

"When I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies
I'll bid farewell to every fear,
And wipe my weeping eyes."

If I suspect the validity of my title to a piece of property I do not fret and worry about it, but go straightway to an abstract office and say, "Look into this matter. See if this title is clouded. Find out all liens and incumbrances of every sort. Look well to the character of every transfer and conveyance involved." And when the title is thus approved I rest upon it. The blessed Book is our abstract office, and its judgment is final.

But, to make assurance doubly sure, we have still another witness. A threefold cord is not easily broken.

III. *The witness of faith.* For in the last reduction there is no assurance but the assurance of faith. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." There are times when self-examination is profitable; but too much self-examination is sure to make us restless and unbelieving. Look out and not in. Look up and not down. The secret of a happy Christian life is to trust God.

Faith shows itself in two ways—in *work* and in *rest*.

1. *In work.* Once having surrendered ourselves to the Lord Jesus we have better business in hand than introspection. Go ye also into the vineyard; there is work to do. Paul is the apostle of assurance. "I know whom I have believed," said he, "and that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him." How calm and

tranquil the spirit that could utter those words on the very brink of death! For he was an old and feeble man, a prisoner awaiting the executioner; and yet, with eyes that neither age nor tears could dim, he saw through the darkness a kingdom, a blood-washed robe and a crown of righteousness. His faith was like an oak, rooted more deeply by the tempest that swept over it. Let us ask him the secret of his faith. "Time was," he answers, "when my heart was filled with the splendid hopes of youth. The world was before me. I sat at Gamaliel's feet and thought of wisdom as the chief thing. All the future was bright with promise; but on that memorable day when the light from heaven shone upon me a word was spoken that transformed my life. 'Who art thou?' 'I am Jesus.' The world thenceforth was a new world to me and life was new; for me to live was Christ. His love constrained me. I determined I would know nothing but Christ, and him crucified. I turned from my pleasures and ambitions, and entered upon a service which promised naught but toil and self-denial. My new Master told me at the outset that a battle must be fought, a race must be run, and I have found it so. But he said also, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' And now, blessed be his name! I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, and I am waiting for a crown which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me. The confused noises of battle will soon be over. I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. I am old and weary and wounded, but victorious! It will be joy unspeakable to hear him say, 'Well done, good servant.' Am I not afraid? Nay, I am ready to be offered. Do I not fear the darkness after death? It is bright with stars of promise. And how have I attained unto this assurance? By

leaning on the Beloved. His word has been true and faithful. I know whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him."

2. Faith also expresses itself in *rest*. If we apprehend Christ we shall not distrust him. If we have really given ourselves to him we shall without misgiving trust our destiny in his hands. Let us cease fretting and worrying. Salvation is of the Lord.

I have a friend who, last summer, at the seashore, made a vain effort to save a drowning woman. He struck out after her beyond the white line of surf, and being a brave swimmer he reached her. She frantically threw her arms about his neck. He tore them off. She clutched his hair. He broke loose, and was obliged to leave her to her fate. "I could have saved her, but she struggled so." We are in the hands of the mighty One. All that we can do towards our own deliverance is to rest in his hands. No soul was ever lost that trusted in Him.

Christian, who set out from the city of Destruction, came at last through all his difficulties to the house Beautiful, and there he was assigned to a chamber called Peace. In the morning early he awoke and looked out upon the Delectable Mountains. And then he sang :

"Where am I now? Is this the love and care
Of Jesus for the men who pilgrims are :
Thus to provide that I should be forgiven,
And dwell already the next door to heaven!"

God has a place for us all in the chamber called Peace. "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

WOE TO ARIEL.

“Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt ! Add ye year to year ; let them kill sacrifices ; yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow : and it shall be unto me as Ariel. And I will camp against thee roundabout, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee. And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.” Isaiah 29:1-4.

THIS meant that Jerusalem was to be overthrown. How improbable it seemed ! The city was at the very summit of its prosperity. Let the years pass until the fulness of time ; let the sheep and bullocks compass the altar ; when the shrill blast of the angel of retribution is heard Jerusalem shall be brought low ; the owl and the bittern shall make their home in her palaces ; out of the silence and desolation let Ariel speak to the coming ages.

The year 70 of the Christian Era will be memorable until the end of time, for then Jerusalem was overthrown. At the beginning of the year, when the Romans laid siege to the city, its people were engaged in civil strife. John, with a garrison six thousand strong, held the porticos of the outer court ; Simon, with ten thousand Jews and five thousand Idumæans, was entrenched on the heights of Zion ; Eleazar, with an army of zealots, had possessed himself of the temple. The arrows from the enemy’s camp came whizzing through the air and quivered in the cedar posts ; the stones from their catapults fell at the feet of the worshippers at the altar ; the space around the temple was in ruins. It was at this time that the weird

prophet spoken of in the chronicles of Josephus went up and down crying, "A voice from the east; a voice from the west; a voice from the four winds of heaven against Jerusalem and her people who have sinned against God."

On April 14th the blast of the Roman trumpets was heard in the distance. Titus had come with his Tenth Legion and a great body of mercenaries. They wound down through the mountains and around the city, enfold- ing it as with the coils of a mighty serpent. Then began in earnest that famous siege which has scarcely a par- allel in history. John, Simon and Eleazar, perceiving the need of harmony at this juncture, joined forces and made a furious attack on the Tenth Legion. It was by the ford of the Kedron, in sight of Olivet where Jesus forty years before wept and cried, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" In this battle the Jewish forces were defeated and driven back with dreadful loss. Such of their number as fell into the hands of the Romans were treated with the utmost cruelty. The morning after the battle five hundred crosses were reared upon the mountains round about and five hundred Jewish captives were seen writhing in agony. As the weary weeks passed on, two ghostly figures made their appearance: *Famine*, gaunt and pitiless. Parents and children struggled for food; they stole down at night to gather offal from the ravines of Hinnom; fought for the reptiles that crawled out from beneath the walls. The soldiers gnawed their belts and sandals. A mob broke into the sanctuary and seized upon the show-bread and the sacred wine. Mary, the daughter of Eleazar, slew her babe for food. Then *Pestilence*: the dead lay unburied in the streets; the plague-stricken crawled

into the cemeteries to die; now and then the famishing soldiers in desperation sallied forth with the cry, "The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon!" only to be driven back within the walls.

On July 17th the Roman army made a concerted assault on the city. The gates were forced and the garrison was driven back to the fortress of Antonia. Here the conduits for conveying the blood of the sacrifices were soon filled with the dead. By this ghastly barricade stood the Jews, gaunt, heroic, desperate, defending their Zion. At length they were forced into the temple and then the temple was taken. The dead lay heaped around the altar. Amid cries of "Raze it! Raze it to the earth!" orders were given that the beautiful structure should be spared. Too late. A burning brand was thrown through the window and the temple was enveloped in flames. It was at this moment, according to a rabbinical tradition, that God, departing from his sanctuary, turned back and kissed its pillars, moaning, "Alas! for my glory," and in vain did the angels try to console him. One after another the great buildings fell into the abyss of flame. The mountains round about echoed back the shrieks of the wounded and the dying. The golden eagles gleamed in the light of the conflagration and the standards of Rome were lifted where the Lion of the tribe of Judah had marshalled the hosts of God.

All was over. It is recorded that eleven hundred thousand had perished in the calamities of this siege. Ninety-seven thousand were carried away into slavery. The plow was drawn over the site of Jerusalem; Mount Zion was sown with salt; the treasures of the magnificent city were carried to distant lands. On the arch of Titus, reared in commemoration of this Roman victory, may

still be seen the long procession of prisoners going into exile. Here are the sick and aged ; mothers with infants tugging at their skirts ; wounded soldiers tearing at their bands ; priests and rabbis, with their faces fallen upon their breasts, and borne before them, by their captors, the seven-branched candle-stick, the censers, and the silver trumpets. As we stand by this ancient arch we can almost hear the words of Jeremiah, as he wrung his hands and lamented, "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people !" And sadder still the words of the Master as, lifting up his eyes, he beheld the temple and cried, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left desolate !"

What says Jerusalem from the dust to us ?

I. *Here is a vindication of God's truth.* All these calamities had been prophesied with the utmost particularity. A nation of fierce countenance, swift as the eagle flieth, was to come from the north ; the city was to be compassed about ; trenches were to be digged ; sword, famine, and pestilence were to let loose their horrors ; the dead were to lie unburied in the streets ; the city was to be overthrown ; the temple destroyed ; not one stone should be left upon another ; its altars were to be torn down ; the bones of its prophets were to be scattered ; its inhabitants were to be led captive ; its ruins were to be sown with salt. All these prophecies were fulfilled. God's word is "yea" and "amen."

II. *Here is a vindication of God's justice.* Be not deceived, God is not mocked ; whatsoever a man soweth—aye, or a nation—that shall he also reap.

On the day when Pilate brought forth Jesus unto the priests and people, saying, "I find no fault in him at all," when he washed his hands in token of his innocency, they all cried with one accord, "His blood be on us, and on our children."

1. The Jews have been more widely scattered than any nation on earth. The *Diaspora* is a proverb. The wandering Jew burdened with his years and longing for release, yet finding no rest for the sole of his foot, is the central figure of a great historic parable. The Jew is the universal exile. He is to be found in every great metropolitan centre from the river unto the ends of the earth.

2. And wherever the Jews go they are a stigmatized race. The very name is a hissing and a by-word. The grandest nation in all history as to wealth and intellect, with a genealogy reaching back to the infancy of time, yet with every man's hand against it. The sins of this people have found them out. In the fourth century they were expelled from Europe with their ears cut off. In the tenth century the Caliphs caused them to be branded on the face and driven away to Arabian deserts. They have suffered countless and unspeakable spoliations, persecutions, and massacres. Sir Walter Scott says, "Except the flying-fish, no race on earth, in air or in water, has been so persecuted." At one time, in the city of York, fifteen hundred Jews were shut up in the castle and refused all quarter. Frantic with despair they perished by a mutual slaughter. Husbands murdered their wives, mothers their children. Did not their death-cries seem to echo those words, "His blood be on us, and on our children after us"?

3. But the worst calamity that has fallen upon Israel has been judicial blindness. To-day every civilized nation

has accepted Jesus. The Jews alone reject him. Was it not written, "The Lord shall smite thee with blindness and astonishment, and thou shalt grope at noon-day as the blind gropeth in darkness"? I was once greatly perplexed by a service which I attended in the great synagogue at Rotterdam. The place was thronged with worshippers. The lights were unkindled, except a candle here and there, just enough to make the darkness visible. The high priest chanted the service in a melancholy voice. I felt as if in a mummy crypt. What could this mean? All at once the character of the service changed. The lights in the great chandeliers were kindled; the worshippers produced tapers, lighted them, and held them aloft; the priest had risen and was reciting in a gladsome voice, the men responding, "Hosannah! hosannah!" On inquiry I learned afterwards that this service was commemorative of the overthrow of Jerusalem and the captivity of its people. And the kindling of the lights meant that Messiah was to come. Oh, when will the hoodwink be taken from Israel's eyes? When shall they see that Jesus is the Christ?

III. *We note here also a vindication of the divine mercy.* When Moses desired to behold the divine glory the answer was, "I will make my goodness to pass before thee; I will proclaim the name of Jehovah before thee; I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious; and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." The subsequent history of Israel was a continual display of God's lovingkindness. "He hath not dealt so with any people."

Observe (1) how faithfully he admonished them: as it is written, "He rose up early" to warn them of the coming danger. He sent his prophets to cry, "Why will ye

be stricken any more? Cease to do evil, learn to do well. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?"

Observe (2) how wondrously his providence has been round about this nation since the day of its calamity. It was God's purpose from the beginning that Israel should remain a peculiar people. All the migrations that have gone out successively from the older countries have mingled their blood with other nations, and so lost their identity. The Jews alone, wandering hither and yon for nearly two thousand years, have preserved their distinctive character—their cast of countenance, their hurried gait, their commercial instincts, their habits of life. They have been in history like the Gulf Stream, that, rising in the Southern Atlantic, courses northward until it empties into the Arctic seas, all the way flowing between banks of cold water, yet keeping itself apart, a volume a thousand times larger than the Amazon and of swiftest current, bearing with it the genial influence of the South to temper the climates of Western Europe, so that Ireland, though in the same latitude as Labrador, is a very garden of bloom and verdure. Thus God has kept the Jewish nation through the centuries a distinct people, loyal to its monotheistic traditions, inadvertently preparing the way for the gospel by teaching the worship of the one true God.

Observe (3) the unfulfilled prophecies respecting the restoration of Israel. There is to be a home-bringing. A literal restoration? The estate of Sir Moses Montefiore owns two-thirds of Palestine. It is scarcely to be supposed, however, that the scattered multitudes of Israel are to be brought back again to that little country by the Mediterranean Sea. There is, however, to be a spiritual restoration. Their eyes are to behold the Messiah.

Those who cried, "Crucify him! crucify him!" shall yet greet him with acclamations, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken, nor thy land Desolate, but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, (that is, my Delight,) and thy land shall be called Beulah, for the Lord delighteth in thee."

The practical lessons for us are (1) God is true. "If ye seek me I will be found of you; but if ye forsake me I will cast you off." In saying these things the Lord is not making a mere play on words; he means them. (2) God is just. We are the children of peculiar privilege. We learned the gospel long ago at our mothers' knees. We heard it from the lips of the village preacher. We have lived in its atmosphere through all our years. Alas! it is a true saying, "Anear the kirk, afar frae God." We have received much, and much shall be required of us. "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" (3) God is merciful. His hands are stretched out still. Out of the story of Israel comes the far-away voice of the Master, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you, as a hen doth gather her brood, and ye would not!" And all along the story of Jewish history the prophet seems saying, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

A TEXT OF WONDERS.

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” Rev. 3:20.

IN one of Holman Hunt's pictures a kingly personage is represented as standing with lamp in hand, under a midnight sky, at the gate of a walled inclosure. He has waited long and patiently. The gate is barred, and over it are grown wild vines and brambles, showing how resolutely it has been closed against him. Underneath the picture are these words: “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

Here is a text of wonders. This is the force of the word “behold.” It calls our attention to a series of startling facts.

First Wonder: “I stand and knock.” The speaker is he of whom it was recorded in prophecy, “his name shall be called Wonderful.” He is wonderful in his person; for, being very God of very God, he is also very man of very man. Wonderful in his character also; the only being on earth of whom it could be said there was “no guile in his heart, no guile on his lips.” Wonderful in his life: his whole biography being comprehended in those words, “he went about doing good.” Wonderful in his death; for in his death he bears the sins of many and by his stripes we are healed. Wonderful in his triumph over death; for in his resurrection life and im-

mortality are brought to light. And most wonderful of all has been his life after death. In Doré's picture of Christ leaving the Prætorium you have observed how he walks alone. His face is marked with the weariness of a long night of shame and scourging, yet he bears himself with a divine dignity, and all stand back for him. The air is rent with shouts of "Crucify him!" "Away with him!" yet priests, rulers and enraged people all stand aside as if overawed. So has Jesus come down through the centuries. Kings and potentates, great teachers and philosophers, have acknowledged his solitary grandeur. And this is he, who, crowned with the homage of friends and foes alike, stands waiting at our door.

Of all the miracles of Jesus none is more amazing than this miracle of condescension. We look over the portal and see him, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" yet "he hath upon his vesture and thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords." His life on earth begins with the words, "there was no room for him in the inn;" and the opening of its last chapter is, "they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts." He was a homeless man. Out on the hillsides, beneath God's silent stars, he who had not where to lay his head slept in the cold dews of night. It was little wonder then that the people's doors were closed against him. They knew not who he was. But we have seen him crowned with the glory of all history. Alas! for us, if there is no room for this Jesus in our hearts.

Second Wonder: "*I stand at the door*"—waiting. He has waited long. He came to us in the bright days of youth, when "life went a-Maying with nature, hope, and poesy." He stood and called, "Let me in! I will be as sunshine to thy pleasures; I will be to thy soul as the

dews of Hermon!" The years went by and manhood came; and still we heard his pleading voice, "I have waited long; my locks are wet with the dew of night; now let me in and I will sanctify to holy uses thy strength and fervor and ambition; I will enable thee to grow unto the full stature of a man!" The years have gone by and the old-time whisperings of the Spirit are as a tale that is told, and the days have come when we say, "I have no pleasure in them;" yet still the Stranger at our door waits and calls—it is the eleventh hour; the night draws near—"Let me in, and in my fellowship redeem the remnant of thy life."

Yes, the pierced hand still knocketh,
And beneath the crownéd hair
Beam the patient eyes, so tender,
Of the Saviour, waiting there!

It is a stony heart indeed that resists such overtures of love. Stony? Ask the stones on the seashore how they were worn and bruised and broken at last, and they will answer, "The long wearing of the waters has done it." The heart that resists the never-ceasing love of Christ, his calls of mercy more frequent than the following of wave on wave, is justly described as "harder than a stone."

There is surely some misunderstanding. We cannot know his errand. We think he comes to judge or to condemn, but "The Son of man is come not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." Dr. Arnot, on hearing that one of his parishioners, a poor widow, was to be evicted for non-payment of rent, took with him a sum of money and knocked at her door at evening. He thought he heard the shuffling

of feet and the turning of the window-blind, but his repeated knockings were unanswered and he went his way. The next morning he called again. When he told of his previous visit the poor widow cried, "Oh, Dr. Arnot! was it you? I heard the knock, but I thought it was my landlord all the while." Oh! if we knew what is in the heart of the divine visitor who stands waiting at our door we surely would not exclude him.

Third Wonder: "I stand and *knock*." Why does he not break down the barriers and force his way? It is because he respects the sanctity of our human nature. A man's heart is his castle. The reason and will are two mighty bolts by which it is fastened against God. He addresses himself to the reason, saying, "Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." But even when the upper bolt is drawn the lower bolt holds fast. We may yield an intellectual assent to all the arguments and entreaties of his grace, but in the last reduction the will must yield or Jesus never can come in. There lies the fault. "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." Ye will not!

A brave soldier was Charles XII. of Sweden. In constant apprehension of attack, he was ever on his guard. His sword was always half out of its scabbard. But in the siege of Frederickshall death smote him in the twinkling of an eye. Yet not so quickly but that his hand instinctively grasped the handle of his sword, so that when his henchmen sprang to catch him the old king was on guard. So men die spiritually. Their will is ever up in arms. The heart inclines, the intellect is convinced, but the will stands defiant to the last.

Fourth Wonder: "If *any* man will open unto me." Great words are these which the gospel uses: "all," "any," "every," "whoever," "whosoever." In heaven are all kinds and degrees of sinners saved by grace. Up yonder is Peter, who denied his Lord. Up yonder is the Magdalene, who, soiled with a wretched life of sin, heard him say, "Come unto me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Up yonder is the penitent thief, who had time but for a single prayer, "Lord, remember me!" All forgiven for Jesus' sake; all clothed in fine linen, clean and white. So, then, there is hope for every one.

A proclamation of amnesty was issued by George III. during our Revolutionary War, in which all our rebellious fathers were offered a free pardon, except John Hancock and a few kindred spirits. The bold signature of John Hancock in the Declaration of Independence had ruled him out. But God's amnesty makes no exceptions. He is able and willing to save unto the uttermost; whosoever will may take the water of life freely.

Fifth Wonder: "*I will come in to him.*" He promises to be our guest. He will consent to be entertained in our sinful hearts as he was in the guest-chamber at Bethany; but, if so, what a transformation there must be! What a turning out of old lusts and passions and darling sins, and what a letting in of peace and joy! I have a pleasant recollection of an old uncle, who always wore a smiling face and whose coming to our village home was like a benediction upon us. He had a kind word for every one, a warm hand-grasp for father and mother, a merry word for us children—and sugar-plums too. Dead now these many years, how sweet his memory! The home was always brighter for his coming, and when he

went his way it was as if some lights went out. But, oh! what must it be when our elder Brother comes in to dwell with us!

Sixth Wonder: "*And I will sup with him.*" The feasts of Vitellius have gone into history. It was not an uncommon thing for him to spend upon a single banquet the revenues of a whole province. Lampreys were brought from distant seas; nightingales' tongues and peacocks' brains and all manner of delicacies were upon the table. Those were illustrious feasts, but nothing like the feast which awaits those who open their hearts to the gracious Son of man. He brings with him the viands of the banquet: water from the King's well, wine from the King's vineyards, apples and pomegranates from the King's orchard; the joy of pardon—"Son, thy sins be forgiven thee;" the peace of God that passeth all understanding—"My peace I give unto you: let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid;" the hope that "maketh not ashamed," with all the consolations of the heavenly grace; but, best of all, His own presence. Up in the Highlands, when Queen Victoria was travelling incognito she came, with a few attendants, to a Scottish home where she asked for entertainment. The old Scotch mother received her quietly, dusted a stool with her apron, and provided such humble fare as chanced to be at hand. She showed so little care or worry that they felt sure she did not know her royal guest. But when the meal was over and they were going, she set the stool aside and said with a courtesy, "Your Majesty, no other shall ever sit there." If such honor and joy were hers, what happiness must linger in the heart that has entertained the Christ!

Seventh Wonder, and greatest of all: "*If any man*

open unto me." If! In this doubt are involved the issues of life and death. Is it not strange that men should be so blind to their eternal weal? A little girl holding her father's hand stood before Holman Hunt's picture of "The Waiting Christ." The look of grief, of ill-requited kindness, on the stranger's worn face touched her to the quick. She looked long and earnestly; her eyes filled slowly with tears; "Papa," said she, "did he get in?"

Here are two wonders: the waiting Christ and the soul refusing to receive him. He speaks to us again to-day. Open unto him. Let the years of thoughtless rejection and ingratitude suffice. Why should we longer reject him? Let us open unto him to-day. To admit him to our hearts means to give up living for self, and forthwith to live for others and for God. It means to give up living for this world and to have our conversation in heaven. It means to lose our "certain looking for of judgment," and have instead a great peace in the soul. It means to lose such pleasures as have in them the bitterness of sin, and gain holier pleasures which are eternal.

"Though some good things of lower worth
 My heart is called on to resign,
 Of all the gifts in heaven or earth,
 The best, the very best, is mine:
 The love of God, in Christ made known,
 The love that satisfies alone,
 The love of God is all mine own!"

Hearken! Now the voice pleads without, "Open unto me, and I will come in and sup with you." What say you? O Jesus Christ! what shall we say? Dearest of friends, most sovereign of kings, mightiest of helpers, come in this day; come in and sup with us!

WHY SHOULD I PRAY?

“Ask, . . . seek, . . . knock.” Matt. 7:7.

THE beginning of theology is the divineness of man. We can entertain no correct views of truth until we recognize the fact that we are akin with God.

It is written that “God created man in his own image and after his likeness.” Wherein does this likeness reside? Not in the body, though it is not inappropriately called “the human form divine”; for God has “neither body, parts, nor passions.” Nor is it mainly in the intellect, for God, being omniscient, performs no mental processes and reaches no logical conclusions: all things being always present to him. The resemblance must be, therefore, in the moral or spiritual part of man. In this he is differentiated from all the lower orders of life: they never bow the knees or lift the eyes in worship; We assert our divine kinship in our communion with God.

What is prayer? We minimize it when we regard it simply as a matter of momentary phrase and posture. It is that, but vastly more. Prayer is like the commerce which goes on between the ocean and the clouds. There is a perpetual exhalation of moisture which descends in morning dews and rains; exhales again in rising mists, and murmurs back in brooks and rivulets and rolling rivers to the seas, and so forever. Thus there is a prayer without ceasing—a devout communion, like the love between a mother and her child, of which words of endearment are an essential part, but not all.

There are some who hold that prayer is a mere relation; but it is difficult to conceive how a devout spirit could fail to express itself in formal acts of devotion. There are others to whom prayer is little or nothing more than saying one's prayers. Still others never pray at all. To all alike the rationale of prayer should be a matter of supreme importance, for there is nothing that more vitally concerns our eternal weal than the ground and method of our communion with God.

I. *It is obedience to the voice of nature.*

“For what are men better than sheep or goats,
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friends?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.”

Plutarch says, “If we traverse the world, we shall find people who have no walls, nor fleets nor armies, no kings nor legislatures, no theatres nor schools; but a people without a temple no man ever saw.” The uplifting of a soul in formal devotion is the expression of a universal instinct. The prayerless man is, therefore, guilty of a sin against nature. If humanity were in its normal state the heart would commune with the great Father as naturally as a heliotrope turns towards the sun. Not long ago I was sent for to visit a humble home where an only child lay dying. The mother had been accustomed to pray in her earlier life, but religion had long ceased to afford her any sensible comfort. The father was a defiant unbeliever. As we stood beside the bed a sudden pallor came upon the little face, the sure token of approaching death, and the father cried in a voice of anguish, “For God's sake, pray!” Thus nature

asserted herself at last ; and indeed there are seasons in every life when the soul is forced to cry out unto God.

II. *Prayer is reasonable.* It is common in these times to say that prayer is irrational, because it suggests an interference with the calm processes of law. This statement is substantially that which Milton assigns to the Prince of Darkness :

“ If by prayer
Incessant I could hope to change the will
Of Him who all things can, I would not cease
To weary Him with my assiduous cries ;
But prayer against his absolute decree
No more avails than breath against the wind,
Blown stifling back on him who breathes it forth.”

In this rationalistic argument, however, certain facts of importance are lost sight of. (1) There is a law-giver who is above all. God reigns in the midst of law. The laws of the universe emanate from him as sunbeams from the central orb. Among the last words of David Strauss were these: “ In the enormous machine of the universe, amid the incessant whirl and hiss of its iron-jagged wheels and the deafening crash of ponderous stamps and hammers, in this terrific commotion, I find myself a helpless and defenceless man ; not sure for a moment that a wheel may not seize and rend me or a hammer crush me into powder : and this sense of abandonment is something awful !” Such is the darkness, the despair, into which the soul is brought when it eliminates God from the philosophy of life. (2) No account is made of God’s reserve. Why should it be assumed that all the laws of the universe have been revealed to us ? We see things moving in a certain way and leap to the conclusion that they can move in no other. But why ? If a member of your household

falls ill the malady is not allowed to pursue its course unhindered; you forthwith call the doctor, who introduces a new factor into the problem—arrests and reverses what seems to be the natural order of things. May not God in like manner be summoned to help us? An engineer is driving his locomotive at full speed when a little child is seen playing on the track before it. What now? Is there no deliverance? Must this monster pursue its course unhindered? No; the engineer lays his hand upon a lever and reverses its wheels. May not the Master of the universe pursue a like course when his children cry unto him? (3) It is forgotten that love is above all. God is love. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." At the beginning of our Civil War there was a general demand for the liberation of slaves, but it was "unconstitutional"—law stood in the way. There came a time, however, when obstacles yielded to a higher necessity: *salus populi suprema lex*. Then Lincoln signed the emancipation proclamation. All legal obstacles yielded to the public weal. Prayer touches the divine heart and takes hold upon that love which is the supreme law. "If earthly parents know how to give good gifts unto their children, how much more shall your Father in heaven give good things to them that ask him!"

III. *It is noble to pray*: and, conversely, it is ignoble not to pray.

If there is a God—and unless all are prepared to make that concession the controversy ends here and now—and if all our blessings are from him, then it would appear that a grateful acknowledgment is in the nature of common courtesy. Let me speak in a parable: I had an acquaintance once who fell into sudden adversity. I

helped him. I provided the food upon his table; I enabled him to keep a shelter over his head; time passed, and prosperity returned to him, but he made no acknowledgment of the debt. To-day I pass him on the street but he does not recognize me. What say you of such a man? He is a mean man. All will agree upon that—he is a mean man. But how is it with yourself in your relations with God? The breath in your nostrils is from him. The bread upon your table is his bread. All that you have in the world is from his gracious hand, yet you have not the courtesy to say, “I thank you.” Is not this ignoble? or shall we observe a lower rule of courtesy in our relations to Jehovah than in our relations with our fellow men? Moreover, we are sensible of having offended him. We have broken his righteous laws. If I tread upon your foot I forthwith offer you an apology. I were no gentleman if I failed to do this. What then shall we say for ourselves if, having grieved our Heavenly Father in numberless ways, we offer no amends? nay, refuse even to say, “I am sorry,” or “I ask pardon”? It is such considerations as these that moved Plato, in formulating his ideal republic, to pronounce prayerlessness a crime in the nature of *lèse Majesté*; and, when persisted in, punishable with death.

IV. *It is in pursuance of the divine will.* A word here will answer. There is scarcely a section of Holy Writ in which we are not enjoined to call upon the Lord and make known our requests unto him. “Ask—seek—knock.” It is the command of God. Here is the altar with the smoke rising continually towards heaven; here are swinging censers with their ascending odors typifying the acceptableness of petition; and here is the mercy-seat sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, who ever liveth to make

intercession for us. If confirmation of the ordinance be asked, we shall find it in the example of Christ himself. What a sermon might be preached on his prayer-life! He was constant in supplication.

“Cold mountains and the midnight air
Witnessed the fervor of his prayer.”

V. *Prayer is answered.* This is the consummation of the argument. Prayer moves the hand that moves the world. It is asserted in some quarters that prayer is valuable for its reflex influence alone: we ask, not that we may receive, but that we may be made content without receiving; our seeking and our knocking are important because they bring us into a devotional and placid mood. It is true that prayer is blessed in its reflex influence. The face of Moses shone when he came down out of the mountain. But this is not all. Imagine a man, when you knock at his door, calling out of his window, “You are quite right, my friend. I have no intention of opening the door, but this is good exercise for you. Keep on knocking. Come again to-morrow, and presently you will attain to such a condition of mind that you will no longer care to come in.” The importunate neighbor in the parable was admitted and received the loaves of bread. Nay, nay; the Lord meant precisely what he said: “Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

A few years ago Prof. Tyndall proposed a prayer-test, which was, very properly, rejected for many reasons, but best of all because a universal prayer-test has been going on since the beginning of time. Men in trouble have gone staggering to the trysting-place to utter their supplication before God, and have come forth light-hearted.

Souls in trouble have prostrated themselves at the mercy-seat, and have risen again to find that the clouds were cleared away, and have gone their way singing. The winter is past, the rain is over, and again the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come. We speak that we do know; we testify that we have seen. This poor man cried out, and the Lord heard and saved him out of all his trouble.

In the time of the Scottish persecutions, the men of a certain village having gone forth to the defence of their country, the village minister was left alone with the women and children. On receiving news of the approach of the bloody Claverhouse he got them all together and sought a shelter among the hills. Ere they had reached their destination they heard the blast of a trumpet, and across a narrow gorge saw Claverhouse and his men. What, then, should be done? The minister knelt down with the women and children about him and prayed: "O Lord, thou seest our extremity. This is the hour and the power of thine enemies. Twine them about the hills, O Lord, and cast the lap of thy cloak over puir old Saunders and these frail bairns, and save these for thy great mercy's sake; then will we tell, to the commendation of thy goodness, what thou didst for us at sic a time." And when they raised their eyes a cloud of mist rising from the valley had intervened between them and their persecutors. He had twined them about the hills; he had cast the lap of his cloak over the women and bairns, and they escaped. A mere coincidence? Praise God, all history is full of such coincidences. The life of every believer is full of them. Miracles? Ay, every answer to prayer is a miracle. God worketh wonders in answer to his children's cry.

To your knees, then, O believer! More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of. God hears and answers. Let us, therefore, pray and never faint. "When wilt thou cease thy begging?" said Queen Elizabeth to Raleigh. "Never, your Majesty," he replied, "until thou cease thy giving."

HOW SHALL I PRAY?

“And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.” Luke 11:1.

WHO among us has not a secret place where the unanswered prayers of the past years are put away like letters bearing the stamp, “Uncalled for”—a place where we go to mourn over hope deferred, crying, “Would God that he had heard me!”

Why are our prayers ever unanswered? Is it because God is unable? Nay. “Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Creator of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?” It is as easy for him to hear the hardest prayer as for a mother to take her infant to her breast. Is it then because he is unwilling? Not this, surely; for “if ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him!” The fault is ours. We ask, and receive not, because we ask amiss.

So, then, no prayer is more important than this: “Lord, teach us how to pray.” To whom can we go but unto him? We stand near the shadow of the olive-trees and hear him as he presses to his lips the purple cup of death. He has taken upon his heart the burden of the world’s sin. The pain of the great sacrifice has begun. “Oh, my Father,” he pleads, “if it be possible let this cup pass from me!” once and again; and then again,

"Oh, my Father, if it be not possible, thy will be done!" He comes forth from the shadow, his face marked with the agony of that awful prayer as it were with great drops of blood. And of him we ask the momentous secret, "Lord, teach us how to pray."

The qualifications of real prayer—the prayer that wins a hearing and an answer at the heavenly throne—are as follows:

I. *We must believe in God.* "When ye pray say, Our Father." A famous positivist was wont to formulate his supplications on this wise: "O God, if there be a God, save my soul, if I have a soul." In like manner the ancient Romans were accustomed to write their prayers on slips of parchment and toss them into the air, in the hope that a favoring wind might carry them to the feet of some propitious deity. So shipwrecked sailors, tossed upon the ocean, write out the story of their extremity, enclose it in a bottle, and trust it to the waves. A child playing by the seashore finds it, opens, and reads it: "We are going down; our provisions are gone; there is no hope." Is this the method of our prayer? Nay; we must believe that God is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. He must be to us a sublime verity, an ever-present help in time of trouble, a refuge from the storm and a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall. We shall not be able to say, "Our Father," unless we believe in him as a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God.

II. *We must get down before him*—low down before him. It is not a question of bodily posture. The priests of the olden time were wont to pray standing, with their faces towards the sky. David sat down before God. Solomon

knelt in the presence of the great congregation when he dedicated the house magnificent. Abraham prostrated himself upon the earth before the Holy One. It matters little whether we sit or stand or kneel, or lie upon our faces like the Moslem when he cries, *Allah il Allah!* if only our souls are humbled before him. The last lesson that we learn is humility. We are loth to concede the difference that separates between the finite and the infinite. But what are we that God should be mindful of us? We are the creatures of his hand and alienated from him by our many sins. It was not until Paul was an aged man that he wrote, Anno Domini 59, "I am not worthy to be called an apostle." It was five years later before he had progressed so far in the great lesson as to confess, "I am less than the least of all saints." But in the year of his death, when he was quite ready for his translation to the heavenly life, he said, "I am the chief of sinners."

III. *We must have something to say.* The word with which God greets us as we approach the mercy-seat is this, "What wilt thou?" There is a broad difference between saying one's prayers and praying. A sigh has more prevailing power with God than the most sweetly chanted Paternoster without heart-meaning. A tear has more of beauty in his sight than the most elegant figure of speech woven in a saint's litany. The penitent cry of a returning prodigal makes sweeter music in his ears than all the antiphonies of the chanting monks.

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire
Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast!"

An illustration of simplicity in prayer is found in

"Bleak House," where poor Joe is dying: he looks up dimly at his companion and says,

"It's turned wery dark, sir! Is there any light a-comin'?"

"Joe, my poor fellow!"

"I hear you, sir, in the dark; but I'm a-gropin', a-gropin'; let me catch hold of your hand."

"Joe, can you say what I say?"

"I'll say anythink as you say, for I knows it's good."

"'Our Father—'"

"'Our Father'—yes, that's wery good, sir."

"'Which art in heaven'—"

"'Art in heaven.' Is the light a-comin', sir?"

"It's close at hand, Joe; '*Hallowed be thy name.*'"

"'Hallowed—be—thy—'"

The light is come upon the poor benighted way. Dead!

IV. *Faith*: the promise is, "If ye shall ask anything in my name, believing that ye receive it, ye shall have it." God must be taken at his word. Prayer without faith is as water poured upon the ground. A father brought his lunatic child to be healed by the disciples in the absence of Christ. In vain did he entreat them; their hands had not yet caught the Master's cunning. The by-standers were deriding them for their impotency, and the child lay at their feet foaming in convulsions. At that moment Jesus came down from the mountain all glowing with the brightness of the transfiguration; as he drew near, the distracted father ran to meet him, crying, "Oh, Master, I beseech thee to look upon my child, for he is my only child, and if thou canst do anything, have mercy upon us!" If thou canst! Ah, notwithstanding his agony of earnestness, he doubted. "It is possible," said Christ,

“if thou believest.” There was something in the words, possibly in the kindly look of Jesus, that convinced the man. “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.” And immediately the child was made whole. It was then that Jesus said to the multitude, “Whatsoever things ye ask for, if ye believe that ye receive them, ye shall have them.”

Doubt is our worst enemy at the mercy-seat. It shuts up the windows of heaven; it clips the wings of our petitions and leaves them fluttering like wounded birds striving in vain to reach the upper air; it bewilders them on the borders of the promised land, so that, like faithless Israel, they “cannot enter in because of unbelief;” it cries, “There is a lion in the way!” it lifts a white flag in the hour of triumph; it chants a dirge when hope calls for hosannas; it blocks up the way to infinite wealth with “ifs” and “perhapses.” But faith is the battle-axe with which the suppliant fights his way to heaven’s gate. Aye, through the gate to the treasure-house. Oh, the wonders that faith works, subduing kingdoms, stopping the mouths of lions, quenching the violence of fire!

We are to believe, not merely in God’s word, but in his wisdom—in his superior wisdom. For we know not what to pray for as we ought.

“We, ignorant of ourselves,
Beg often our own harms, which the wise powers
Deny us for our good.”

It is not so much a spirit of submission we need as of cheerful acquiescence in the divine wisdom. Paul tells us that he prayed thrice that his thorn in the flesh might depart from him. The Lord, however, knew best. He knew that Paul’s thorn had some disciplinary value which

made it necessary to his welfare, so he said, "My grace shall be sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." It was a sore trial; no doubt Paul groaned under it and wondered why God could not grant his desire. But the time came when he perceived the meaning of it, and said, "Most gladly, therefore, will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." This is the voice of filial confidence. It does not mean that we are content to have our prayers unanswered, but that we are quite content, in view of God's superior wisdom, to have him answer as he will. Thus Charles Wesley wrote:

"Whate'er I ask, I surely know
 And steadfastly believe,
 Thou wilt the thing desired bestow,
 Or else a better give.
 To Thee, I, therefore, Lord, submit
 My ever fond request ;
 And own, adoring at thy feet,
 Thy will is always best."

V. *Importunity*. Let us remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force." In like manner Terence, in speaking of prayer at the pagan altars, used the expression *obtundere deos*, as if the petitions must be rolled over like rumbling wheels against the doorways of the gods. Of this we may be sure, God loves our importunity. Bishop Hall says, "It is not the arithmetic of our prayers, how many they be; nor the geometry of our prayers, how long they be; nor the rhetoric of our prayers, how elegant they be; nor the music of our prayers, how sweet they be; nor the divinity of our prayers, how much of the marrow of sound

doctrine they hold ; but it is the fervency of our prayers that availeth much."

That was a wonderful parable that was enacted by the brook Jabbok when Jacob wrestled with the Angel of the Covenant. All night long he struggled with his unknown Antagonist until, when the morning began to shine above the eastern hills, the Angel cried, "Let me go, for the day breaketh." It was, however, a question of life or death with the patriarch, for his wronged brother was awaiting him beyond the brook. "I will not let thee go," therefore he cried, "until thou bless me." Then the blessing came, and Jacob was crowned a prince because he had prevailed with God. It is given for our instruction, that we may know how men ought always to pray and not to faint.

VI. *The use of appropriate means* : for faith without works is dead. Hannah More was wont to say,

"If faith produce no works, I see
Thy faith is not a living tree ;
They're soul and body, hand and heart ;
What God hath joined let no man part."

One reason why rich men's sons so frequently come to naught is because their fathers do everything for them. God means that we shall have everything that we need, but, like the father of Prince Hal, he intends that we shall win our spurs. The wagoner in the old fable, who, when his cart was stuck fast in the mire, stood with folded hands praying to Hercules for deliverance, was laughed at by all who observed him. At length, however, a philosopher passed by who said, "Friend, how would it answer if thou shouldst put thy shoulder to the wheel?" God helps no one out of difficulty unless he shows a disposition to help himself.

We have seen now some of the prerequisites of successful prayer. But after all it is not so important that we should pray properly as that we should pray somehow. Our Father is not exacting. He heard that poor woman who in her sorrow of childlessness came and threw herself upon the temple floor and moved her lips but uttered not a word. He welcomes all who come to lay their burdens at his feet.

A youth was condemned to die for desertion from our Federal army. His widowed mother determined to save him. She made her way to Washington afoot, preparing herself as she went for the ordeal that awaited her. She knew just how she would address the President if she were permitted to meet him. She was admitted to the Executive Mansion. No sooner did she see the tall, homely man with the kindly face approaching her than all her fine words and well-rounded phrases forsook her, and she threw herself before him crying, "Oh, Mr. Lincoln, save my boy!"

"There's a wideness in God's mercy
Like the wideness of the sea :
There's a kindness in his justice
Which is more than liberty.

"If our love were but more simple
We should take him at his word ;
And our lives would be all sunshine
In the sweetness of our Lord."

THE AMERICAN SABBATH.

“Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.” Ex. 31:13.

THE children of Israel were called to be a peculiar people. It was their special work to keep the oracles and hand them down to coming ages. It pleased God to make a covenant with them in which he promised, on condition of faithfulness, a continuance of prosperity and national life. The sign of that covenant was the Sabbath. The observance of that day was to be a token that Israel was loyal to the divine law. A special promise was attached to it—“If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”

No two nations are alike. Each has its distinctive features. In nothing is the difference more marked than in the mode of Sabbath observance. The Latin nations spend the day in pleasure: in Spain it is the bull-fight; in Italy the carnival; in Paris the dance-hall, the open

(*) The Anniversary Sermon of the American Sabbath Union, by Rev. D. J. Burrell, D. D., at the Marble Collegiate Church, December 10, 1893.

theatre, the annual races, and pleasure of every sort. The Teutonic nations observe the day—if it may be called observance—in a more phlegmatic way. They have the *Schuetzenfest*, the beer garden, the concert, the socialistic meeting. The Anglo-Saxon nations preserve the serious traditions of the rest day. In England the rule of observance is prescribed by the national church; in America, however, there is no religious establishment, and the Sabbath is in no wise under denominational control, but the day is not the less scrupulously kept on that account. It is distinctively a rest day.

No nation is more loyal to the Sabbath than our own. The Pilgrim Fathers, as they neared the New England coast, found it impossible to land without desecrating the holy day. It was bleak December weather. The ship was moored by a little island at an hour's distance from the mainland. There they landed and spent the Sabbath.

“ Amid the storm they sang ;
And the stars heard, and the sea !
And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang
To the anthem of the free.”

From that day until the present the Sabbath has been observed with more or less earnestness among us. It is *dies non* in our courts and legislatures. As a rule, the work of the people is arrested, the fires are banked in the factories, the hammer lies unused upon the anvil. With a solitary exception, every one of the States of the Republic has enacted Sabbath laws.

The American Sabbath is one of our peculiar institutions. It is not secular, neither is it subject to ecclesiastical authority. How could it be, in a government where there is an utter divorcement of Church and State?

Nevertheless it rests upon a strong foundation. It finds its sanctions in certain facts, which must endure in the very nature of things.

I. *A physical or hygienic fact.* The necessity of Sabbath rest was written in the constitution of man before it was inscribed on the tables of the law. It is interwoven with our very nerves and sinews. Our sleep is not enough. The clock runs down regularly at the end of the sixth day, and the Sabbath is the key that winds it. The philosopher Proudhon, a socialist, and author of the aphorism, "Property is robbery," was ready to concede an argument for revelation in the fact that the Bible fixes the exact ratio of labor to rest. "No scientist," he says, "could have discovered that the proper ratio is six to one." In the time of the French Revolution it was decreed that every tenth day should be set apart for rest and recreation, but the effort failed. In the last Paris Exposition a medal was awarded to Sabbath literature in recognition of the fact that one day in seven is necessary for physical and mental rest. Thus it is made to appear, quite apart from the Scriptures, that the Sabbath was made for man.

II. *An industrial fact.* In America we are profoundly concerned for the welfare of our workingmen. The laboring class is our strength and hope. We have no titled orders or privileged classes. We lean upon the "Third Estate." So that whatever concerns the welfare of honest toil is of supreme importance to our national life. It will be well, therefore, to give heed to the fact that wherever the Sabbath has been devoted to toil the result has been not an increased income, but merely seven days' work for six days' wages. The Lord admonished the children of Israel that manna gathered on the Sabbath despite his

injunction would breed worms. The same is true of any outcome of Sabbath labor. It never pays. A committee appointed in Louisville to investigate this matter reported as follows: "We appeal to the workingmen, to those who labor by the piece or by the day. In regard to Sunday amusements we remind them that wherever the Sunday laws are disregarded labor increases much faster than public amusement. In Paris, for instance, under the appearance of a gala day, the workingman's Sunday is as toilsome as any other day, the contractors getting out of their men the most that is to be gotten. And, what closes up the case, it can be shown that if the Sabbath becomes a working day the laborer will not get a penny more for seven days' toil than for six." This has been tested again and again. The owner of one of the great mills in Minneapolis states that his men not only do better work, and keep themselves in better health, but grind more flour per annum by working six days in the week than men in other mills can do when working seven days.

III. *A social fact.* We glory in our American homes. The home-life depends upon Sabbath observance. The man of the house is busy in the shop or office all the week. He leaves his home in the early morning and oftentimes returns after his children are in bed. It is on the Sabbath, if ever, that he makes the acquaintance of his wife and family. Then he gathers them about him at the family altar; sits with them in the sanctuary in the family pew; has time to commune with them around the family board; it is, in many cases, his only opportunity for knowing them. In France the home-life has been largely broken up by indulgence in Sabbath pleasures. You may see the people sitting in front of the cafés all the day, and far into the night. In Germany the beer-

garden has encroached upon the sanctity of domestic life. The home is often little more than a place to eat and sleep in—a front door and a bed room. In line with these pleasures a vast amount of Sabbath toil has crept in. A bill was brought before the Imperial Parliament some time ago providing that, except in cases of necessity, manufacturers may not compel their workmen to labor on Sundays. During the consideration of this measure a member from Berlin, who was also a physician, said, “I have had occasion, in my career as a practitioner, to visit more than 9,000 workmen who worked on Sunday in their shops or at their homes, and I have it on proof that the Sunday labor has the most disastrous effect. In their homes slovenliness and discord reign; the life of the wine-shop has supplanted family life.”

IV. *A civil fact*; that is, in the province of political economy. It is greatly to be questioned whether a nation can be continuously prosperous which does not keep the Lord's Day. France is the land of revolutions. Pius IX. in a brief pontifical wrote, “Lose not a day, not an hour, not a moment; go and tell France, that France which is so dear to me, that if she would be saved she must return to the sanctification of the Lord's Day.” In Germany, where the same danger has been realized, a change of public sentiment is noted. Von Moltke and other distinguished leaders have, in the interest of the Imperial welfare, lent their influence distinctly to Sabbath reform. In England, an effort to open the public museums on the Sabbath was defeated in the House of Commons by a vote of 229 to 87. The Lord High Chancellor, in a speech against the proposed measure, said, “If the State once enters upon a course of the kind, the only point at which it would stop short is the point which has been

reached in foreign capitals, where there is absolutely no protection to the workingman in the observance of the Sabbath. I resist the motion, too, on higher grounds. Nothing could be more injurious to the intellectual, the moral, and the physical welfare of the country than that anything should be done by the State which would lend countenance to the idea that men are anxious to get rid of the observance of the Sabbath as they now enjoy it." In America we are obliged to meet the political heresies which are brought to us by immigrants from all the nations beyond the sea. God save the republic! The voice of history is clear: the nation that defies God in this matter cannot prolong its life. The children of Israel, in spite of warnings and admonitions, refused to keep the Sabbatic law. The desecration continued for a period of seventy Sabbatic years. For this offense explicitly they were sent away into captivity; and, in exact retribution, by the rivers of Babylon they endured a wretched bondage of seventy years.

V. *A fact in the argument as to personal rights.* We are often told, when urging the enforcement of our Sabbath laws, to "mind our own business." This is precisely what we propose to do. "What constitutes a State?" says Sir William Jones.

"Men who their duties know,
But know their rights, and knowing, dare maintain."

(1) I have a right to rest without disturbance on the Lord's Day. (2) No man can presume under the guarantee of our free institutions to interfere with that right. (3) It is incumbent on the government to protect me and other citizens in that right of Sabbath rest. In these facts lies the *rationale* of our Sabbath laws.

In the International Congress at Geneva, in 1876, where this question was in controversy, an American delegate spoke as follows: "I beg you, European Liberals and Democrats, to accept this as the unanimous voice of American Democracy, after 250 years of practical experiment: that we want, and will have, our legally protected day of rest as the *sine qua non* of our free institutions and of our economic success. We recognize the patent and obvious principle that *the liberty of rest for each depends upon a law of rest for all*. The difference between American republicanism, which has been learned by 250 years of successful experiment, and the republicanism of our imported fellow-citizens, that has been learned from books of theory under the shadow of old despotisms, is this: that we insist that the law of the liberty of Sunday rest shall be applied faithfully, impartially, logically, to the whole community, on the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity, while a part of our naturalized fellow-citizens are resolved that the equal right to repose of one part of the population shall be sacrificed to the privilege of amusement of another part. We stand for equal rights in this matter; we shall not give them up; and for the charter and warrant of this great national franchise we appeal, not to some venerable parchment, stamped with heraldic seals and written over with concessions wrung from an unwilling tyrant; not to declarations of the rights of man promulgated with theatric pomp by a revolutionary assembly; not to the provisions of our storm-beaten but staunch and stable Constitution; not even to the preamble of that illustrious Declaration of Independence whose trumpet tones, a hundred years ago, struck the first note of that march to which the world has been moving forward ever since; but to that primeval and

most democratic statute-book which, first in the history of mankind, ordained a government without monarchy or aristocracy; which has been the inspiration of the world's best liberty, and which in its Sabbath law enunciated thus the equality of human rights: 'The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work; thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant—that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou.'

VI. *A moral fact*; that is, in the province of the moral life. Our life is more than meat and drink. A man is better than a horse. We are made in God's likeness; we confront great problems; we apprehend sublime truths; we commune with the Infinite; we live for ever. It is wise, therefore, to hold ourselves above the mere drudgery of common tasks. The soul must have breathing space, and we must turn aside and think. The Sabbath is not for mere physical rest, but for the recreation of our nobler powers. It is a day when we may come up out of the mists of the valley and dwell in the sunshine and breathe exhilarating draughts of mountain air with God. It is a time to look in upon our own souls; to look around upon the welfare of our friends and neighbors; to look up towards the inheritance which is prepared for us, and into the face of our Heavenly Father. Thus is it gloriously true that the Sabbath was made for man; for his uplifting; for the enlargement of his nobler life. An officer in one of the labor guilds of New York city writes as follows: "Within a radius of three-quarters of a mile of the Collegiate Church there are at least five community workshops of shoemakers, in which labor is carried on a part or whole of Sunday. For this there is no adequate return in wages. Twenty-five years ago a custom shoemaker could earn

twenty-five dollars a week ; to-day he cannot make more than one-half of it. So with all other occupations where Sunday labor is the rule. The result of this Sabbath desecration is lamentable in the extreme. Wherever it is pursued the average intelligence is low, and the moral tone almost ceases to exist. I can never think of some of these places without calling to mind Carlyle's story of the men of the Dead Sea, of whom he says : ' They made no use of their souls, and so lost them. But there returned to them every Sabbath a bewildered and half conscious, half-unconscious reminiscence of the time when they were men with souls responsive to the eternal verities.' "

VII. *A religious fact.* Nor is this without weight in our republic. For, however we may object to the union of Church and State, we, as a nation, acknowledge our obligations to God. And it has been formally determined by the unanimous decision of the Supreme Bench that ours is a Christian nation ; that is, its underlying principles are those which belong to the Christian faith. So that, in the last reduction, we make our appeal always to the divine law. Observe (1) God claims a property right in the Sabbath ; as it is written, " The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." It is, therefore, in the nature of robbery for a man or a nation to refuse to observe it. (2) The duty of Sabbath observance grows out of the divine example ; as it is written, " In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and rested on the seventh day : *Wherefore*, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." We are God's children, and we are required to keep the Sabbath because he kept it. (3) It rests distinctly on a divine command : " Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." The word " remember " is significant ; it suggests that there is danger of forgetting it.

Now, finally, what is the duty of Christian people in these premises? Two things we can and should do. *First*, For ourselves, we should scrupulously keep the day. Let us do no work therein. When we leave the office or workshop on Saturday night it should be closed with a time-lock set to open on Monday morning. Secular affairs of the world should cease for us. There should be no reading of business letters or consulting the ledger on the holy day. The Sunday newspaper should be kept out of our homes as an intruder. The hours should be scrupulously observed in rest and worship—in the delights of the family circle, in the sacred pleasures of the sanctuary, and in the trysting place with God. *Second*, It devolves upon us to stand guard over the sanctions of the Lord's Day. We have statutory laws for its observance; in the interest of our country and society, as well as of our personal welfare, let us look to their enforcement. It will be a portentous day for America when the Sabbath shall lose its hold upon the people. On May 16, 1871, in Paris, the Communists tore down the Column Vendome. It represented a cycle of glorious history. It commemorated Austerlitz and Marengo. There were sad hearts in Paris that day, for when it fell the glory of France fell with it. So will it be if ever the malignant spirits that assail our American Sabbath shall have their way. All the prized traditions of our civil and religious freedom are associated with that day. The Lord enable us to so employ its sacred hours that we may all at last enter into the rest which remaineth for the people of God!

THE BARREN FIG-TREE.

“And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry: and seeing a fig-tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find anything thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.” Mark 11: 12, 13, 14.

IT was Monday of Passion Week. There were four days only, and so much to be done. Our Lord was entertained during these last days at the home of Lazarus in Bethany, an easy walk from Jerusalem. Each morning he betook himself to the city and preached to the multitudes who thronged to hear him, and late at night, weary, he retraced his steps to Bethany. On this particular morning, as he drew near to the city with some of his disciples, it is said that he was a-hungered. Had Martha, the busy housewife, neglected to prepare his morning meal? Or had he, in deference to the Jewish law, refused to break his fast before the early sacrifice? Or had he spent the previous night on the mountain-side in prayer? In any case, he was a-hungered. Here was a fig-tree by the roadside in full foliage. He approached, lifted the leaves, and, lo! there was nothing there. Then he said, “No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever.”

The next day, as certain pilgrims came that way they saw the fig-tree withered, and said, “There is a worm at its root;” or perhaps, “The sun scorched it.” But as his disciples passed by they called to remembrance the Mas-

ter's words, and Peter said, "Behold, the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered away!"

Why did Jesus curse the fig-tree? Not for its uncomeliness; for, while its neighbors stood all bare and unsightly, it was adorned with foliage. Nor yet for its barrenness; there was no reason why it should be bearing fruit at that season, "for the time of figs was not yet." But the tree was cursed for being false. It vaunted itself above all its fellows as a fruitful tree, for the fig-tree is wont to put forth its fruit before its leaves. "Behold," it seemed to say, "my forwardness! The other trees have naught but swelling buds, yet here am I in full leaf. Thou art hungry, come and see what fruit I bear." But for all this profession there was nothing to show.

"But," say the critics, "it was not Christ like to curse a living thing. He came not to destroy but to save. His miracles were full of mercy—the opening of blind eyes, the wiping away of lepers' scales, the healing of sore hearts." A great truth, however, was to be taught, and it was Christlike thus to teach it. The fig-tree was his, for he made it; standing by the roadside, no man owned it; it was an insensate thing and suffered not. Shall a farmer have right to cut down an olive-tree for the crooked share of his plough, or shall a boatman fell an oak for his canoe, and may not the Son of God have right to go among his own trees and choose one for a mighty use?

The cursing of this barren tree was an acted parable. It taught this lesson: *the penalty of an empty profession is eternal emptiness; the outcome of fruitlessness in this probationary life is barrenness for ever.*

I. *This lesson was primarily addressed to the Jews.* They were a "chosen people." Chosen to what? Not

to a peculiar right in the kingdom so much as to peculiar tasks and responsibilities. At the time when the nations were wandering away from truth and righteousness it pleased God to call Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees, that he and his children should become the depositaries of the true religion and of the hope of the coming Messiah, and should pass on that blessed heritage to the coming ages. To this end they were entrusted with the oracles in which was recorded "the hope of Israel;" that is, the coming of Messiah, who should deliver the world from sin. To the same end they had the Temple, with its elaborate ceremonial, in which every knop and almond blossom, the laver, the brazen altar, the table of show-bread, the golden candlestick, the fine twined curtain, the ark of the covenant, with blood, blood sprinkled everywhere, all told of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; the Lamb whose offering on Calvary was to bring about the glorious restitution of all things. And to the same end they were secluded in the promised land: a little strip of country, hemmed in like a closet by sea and desert and mountains, where they were to dwell as a separated people, holding in trust their great responsibility and awaiting the coming of the promised One.

What was the outcome? They became the proudest people on earth; insomuch that they had no dealings with the nations around them. They held their Scriptures as a fetich; the word of God was overlaid with the traditions of the elders. The Temple came to be the centre of an empty ritualism of which the Lord grew weary. "To what purpose," said he, "is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts. Bring no more vain oblations. Your incense is an abomination unto me. The

new moons and Sabbaths and calling of assemblies I cannot away with. I am weary to bear them." They were scrupulous in the observance of all outward forms. They paid tithes of mint, anise and cummin; they broadened their phylacteries; they made long prayers at the corners of the streets to be seen of men; the life had wholly gone out of their devotion. "Ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter," said the Lord, "but within they are full of extortion and excess." And again, "Ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which are fair without, but within full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness." The nation was false to its great responsibility. While keeping up this show of righteousness it had wandered far from God. "The hope of Israel" had so far lost its hold upon them that when Messiah came, whom they should have received with acclamations of welcome, he had for them no form or comeliness, and there was no beauty in him that they should desire him. And, whereas they had been chosen to receive the Christ and glorify him before all the people, they led him out beyond their walls and put him to an ignominious death.

For this recreancy to duty, for this abundance of foliage without fruit, the curse of barrenness passed upon them. A people of great intellect, of splendid culture, of vast wealth, of glorious history, of an unparalleled lineage, they are the one great people who are without apparent influence on the world's destiny or the great movements of succeeding ages.

In the old wall of Jerusalem there is a rood of cyclopean blocks where the Jews are wont to assemble and sorrowfully read over the records of their past glory. It is their "wailing-place." They sit rocking to and fro, sobbing their prayers into the very crevices of the wall.

The barren tree is withered, stripped of its leaves and fruit alike: the chosen people, false to their duty and their destiny, are doomed to perpetual fruitlessness.

II. *But the lesson comes nearer home; it is for the followers of Christ.* We also are a chosen people. It is written: "He gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The "good works" here referred to have reference to the propagation of the gospel of Christ. The work which Israel failed to do is laid upon us, namely, to transmit the true religion to coming generations and to spread abroad the gospel of the Messiah until all the nations shall bow before him.

We profess great things. The tree puts forth a luxuriant foliage, in which the world as well as our Master has reason to expect much fruit. We profess repentance; that is, hatred and abandonment of sin. We profess regeneration; that is, a new life in Christ Jesus—new hopes, new purposes and aspirations. We profess sanctification; that is, a building up of character under the influence of the Holy Spirit in the imitation of Christ. We profess to be the servants of our Lord, anxious to follow in his footsteps in the winning of souls and the hastening of the Kingdom of Truth and Righteousness. We profess an entire consecration—time, talents, possessions all laid before our Master's feet. We profess to believe that our life here is but a handbreadth and that we journey towards a better country, even a heavenly, so that our conversation should not be here but in heaven, and our lives be hid with Christ in God. The tree that bears such leafage should surely be abundantly fruitful. What manner of persons ought we to be!

The fruit which should naturally be expected of us

under these circumstances is of two kinds. (1) Character. We are called to be saints and holy people. You remember how St. Anthony is represented—sitting in his cave with downcast face, clad in hair-cloth, and bearing the marks of long fasting, a crucifix over him, a skull beside him. But this is not the saint of modern time. He is rather a man among men; truthful, upright, one who meets his honest obligations, vows and pays to his own hurt, good-tempered at home, reverent everywhere, charitable and kindly towards all. You recall also how St. Cecilia is represented—with harp in hand, halo about her brow, and eyes uplifted towards an angel choir. But this is not the saint of modern time. Nay, rather, an elect lady who layeth her hands to the spindle and maketh strength and honor her clothing; who reacheth forth her hands to the needy and feareth the Lord; true and gentle in her appointed place. It is such saintliness that should be expected of those who follow the Christ.

The other form of fruit is (2) Duty; by which we mean loyalty to the supreme obligation of the Christian life, which is to do one's utmost for the deliverance of this world from the shame and bondage of sin. Here is a world lying in darkness. Here is the cross uplifted in its midst, and here is the voice saying, "Go ye, evangelize." Our Lord came into the world to save it by his self-denial, and he said, "As the Father hath sent me, so have I sent you." We are to make our power felt in the betterment of our community, in the sweetening of social life, in the winning of souls. "Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt hath lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing." "Ye are the light of the world; let your light so shine that men may see your good works and glorify God."

III. *The lesson has a still further application: to non-Christians.* "We make no profession," they say. Oh, yes, they do! They profess great things. They put forth an abundance of leaves. 1. They profess a complete self-sufficiency. They feel no need of prayer; they rise in the morning and enter upon the dangers of travelling through an unknown country without calling for help and guidance from above, and in this they avow themselves to be able to get along without God. 2. They profess to have no need of the atoning work of Christ. They stand on their own merits. If they are conscious of sin they propose to bear it. We who have thrown ourselves upon the mercy of the Saviour know that we cannot in our own righteousness stand at the judgment bar, but they have no such scruples. The mis-lived past has no terrors for them. 3. They profess to have no need of the church. The church is a co-operative association in which Christ has placed us because we need mutual prayer and helpfulness. But they need no prayer, they need no sympathy; they are strong enough to stand by themselves.

It is clear that those who make such imposing professions should be righteous above others. They certainly should (1) bear the fruit of spotless character. Jean Jacques Rousseau, when he was dying, said, "O thou unknown Spirit, I return the soul which I received from thee as pure as when thou gavest it." The man who could speak with such assurance was surely blind to his own failings. Yet one who professes no need of prayer, no need of the atonement and intercession of Christ and no need of the fellowship of the church ought to be able to say as much as he; and (2) he should bear the fruit of duty as well. An abstinence from all relation with the church

does not absolve from duty. A man has his own appointed place to fill, his own great responsibilities to meet, his own tasks to perform in an earnest world. To live in the tread-mill of mere *brod-und-butterschaft*, to seek a livelihood or a competence, to win success in selfish ambitions, to attain wealth or honor, this is surely not to meet one's obligations. At this point success, if it go no farther, is failure; for it means recreancy to one's high destiny and to the grave duties which are involved in it.

It is said that when the great temple of Minerva was erected in Athens all sculptors were invited to compete in the carving of a great statue for its dome. On the day of the award a famous artist brought his work: a life-size statue of Minerva, so beautiful that it was received with acclamations of delight. But as it was raised to its place it grew smaller and smaller, until it seemed but a speck against the sky. The work of a poor mechanic was then unveiled, huge and uncouth; but as it was raised aloft its deformities vanished and it seemed more and more comely, until, reaching the dome, it seemed animate with life. Alas! for the man whose work here is only life-size; who measures his duty by the requirements of time and sense. How it will dwindle as it approaches eternity! But work for the Master, wrought in simple love of right doing and for the universal weal, will grow more and more beautiful as earth fades and eternity draws near. Oh, let us live as if we believed in the glory of the endless life!

And what is the outcome? Here is the universal law: *to be unfruitful here is to be barren forever*. You may see outside the gates of Bombay the holy Yogi, who, in obedience to his solemn vow, has held his right arm aloft so long that it has become a nerveless, shrivelled

thing ; its sinews are as hard as cord, its nails are like a crow's talons ; it is indeed no better than dead. Yet that right arm was capable of great things. It might have ploughed the field, it might have reached out in charity, it might have lifted the burden of the weary, but it has lost its chance. So it is ever true that unused powers are cursed with uselessness. The life of mere profession is cursed with barrenness : " No man eat fruit of thee for ever." But, conversely, the reward of fruitfulness is promotion to higher tasks. We think that heaven is a place of rest, but the rest of heaven is that which comes from loyalty to duty : " Thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities." To fight the good fight here is to wear the service-chevron there. Paul had suffered many things in Jerusalem as elsewhere. He had been scourged and imprisoned and stoned. He bore about in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus, and when he was old his reward came. How ? In a season of rest ? Nay. But in glorious promotion. There was a city where to preach the gospel meant to face the mouths of lions or the flaming sword. " Thou hast borne witness of me in Jerusalem," said the Master, " thou shalt bear witness of me also in Rome." Ah, this is heaven : to go from noble service to noble service, from fruitfulness to the bearing of more fruit ! The man who is faithful here shall be yonder like a tree planted by the rivers of water ; he shall bring forth his fruit in his season ; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper—shall prosper forever !

A PROFITABLE LIFE.

“I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me.” Phil. 10:11.

PAUL, while awaiting the outcome of his appeal to Cæsar, was kept in custody in the Prætorian camp. Here he was treated with marked courtesy. The law requiring him to be chained to a guard could not be relaxed, but for two years he was permitted to dwell in his own hired house, where he had liberty to receive and converse with all. He was an old man of sixty, in decrepit health, but his intellect was unimpaired. It was during this imprisonment that he wrote many of those wonderful Epistles which are still the doctrinal guides of the church. By his personal address he led certain of the imperial household to the knowledge of Christ. He was constantly engaged, as he tells, in “preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him.” One day a poor refugee found his way to the camp and was brought into contact with this aged prisoner. He was a forlorn object, but his misery did not exclude him from the provisions of the gospel of grace. Paul won his confidence and the story of his past life came out. “I was a slave,” said he, “in the house of Philemon at Colosse.” (Philemon! No doubt Paul started at the name, for he had known Philemon in the fellowship of Christ.) “I was indolent and discontented in his service. At length I robbed my master and ran away. On coming to Rome

I fell in with the surging multitude of slaves. Among them I squandered my ill-gotten money, and thus came to this sorry plight." To this fugitive slave, hungry, friendless, and guilt-stricken, the great Apostle preached the gospel of forgiving grace. For had not Christ come to seek the lost? Did he not minister to thieves and magdalenes? Was he not able to save unto the uttermost? The poor guilty slave accepted Christ as his Saviour. What then? "Go back," said Paul, "to your old master and make confession and restitution, as becomes a penitent man." He consented, and bore with him a letter, charming in its gentle diplomacy, in which Paul besought Philemon to receive his former slave "not as a servant, but as a brother beloved;" adding, no doubt with reference to the purloined money, "if he have wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on my account; I will repay it." He proposes, moreover, to stand sponsor for his future behavior, saying, "I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds; who in time past was to thee unprofitable, but will now be profitable to thee and to me." As to the subsequent life of Onesimus we know nothing, though tradition says that he became bishop of one of the Macedonian churches.

It is a great thing to be profitable; to be of some account in the world. "Is life worth living?" That depends. If it mean simply a year in a mother's arms, and a year or two more with doll or rocking-horse, and a few more years with primer and spelling-book, then the pleasures of youth, dreams and aspirations; then the delights and responsibilities of social and business life, cares, crow's feet, laughter, tears, "the whips and scorns of time," the almond-tree blossoming, the grasshopper a

burden, eyes dim, shoulders bowed, lights out, curtains down, crape on the door, a handful of dust—if that be all, the game is not worth the candle. It is no better, as the great dramatist says, than “a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.”

It is a question of investment ; *quid pro quo* ; we shall get nothing out of life unless we put something into it.

I. *Our capital.* What is our stock in trade? What have we to invest? I and mine, you and yours, all that we are, with everything that we possess, must be put out at usury if we would live profitable lives. I am a tri-partite being, made up of body, intellect, and immortal soul, and all these, in this momentous transaction, must be wisely disposed of.

1. *The body* ; a bundle of physical energies. It must be kept in the best possible condition that it may be put to the best uses. Not long ago I saw an application for a parsonage sent in by one of our rural ministers in which he said, “It is hard to make full proof of my ministry in such a place as this ; the roof leaks, the cellar is damp, and the flue does n’t draw. It takes the heart all out of me.” No tenant can do much under these conditions. The body was intended to be the temple of divinity ; it must be kept in good order, as a part of our working capital, if we would derive a substantial profit from it.

2. *The mind* ; endowed with regal gifts. Not all are equally gifted, but in the distribution of his talents the Master has entrusted “to every man according to his several ability.” The man with a single talent is as fortunate as is the other with ten, for power is always accompanied by commensurate responsibility. To put out our talents at usury, whether they be few or many, is to quit ourselves like men. At this point we observe a lament-

able waste. Was ever a man more richly endowed than Lord Byron? yet he squandered his gifts, and died at thirty-seven lamenting,

“ My days are in the yellow leaf,
The flowers and fruits of love are gone,
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone.”

Was ever a genius more highly gifted than Edgar Allen Poe? Yet he also wasted his substance, and died in the prime of his manhood lamenting,

“ And the raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas, just above my chamber door ;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the
floor
Shall be lifted—*nevermore!*”

3. *The immortal soul.* Here is the residence of our likeness to God. It is in the use of our spiritual faculties that we commune with our Creator and face the great problems which reach out into the eternal ages. When Lysimachus, overcome by thirst, had bartered his kingdom for a cup of water, he cried out, “ Oh, wretch that I am, to sell my glory for a moment’s comfort!” How much more foolish is the man who, in the pursuit of things that perish with the using, forfeits his higher life. No problem was ever suggested so important as this: “ What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

4. *Our time.* In this all are blest alike, for each has all there is of it. How easily the words *Tembus fugit* fall from the schoolboy’s lips; yet, what a tremendous truth they tell. Time flies! Aye, never to return. We turn the hour-glass over and its sands run through again, but a

wasted hour cannot be treated in that way. Lost wealth may be regained by patient industry; lost health by the use of proper remedies and due regard to nature's laws; lost reputation by penitence and right living; but time lost is gone for ever. In vain did the dying Queen of England cry, "Millions for an inch of time!" The part of wisdom is to use each passing hour so as to realize the most from it.

5. *Our acquisitions.* If we have wealth, we have a burden of responsibility with it. If we have knowledge, that "is power"; but as Adam Smith said, "Power, to the last atom, is responsibility." If we have moral convictions, they also are a part of our working capital and eternity depends on their wise use. All men have moral convictions, but few are enriched by their full benefits. William E. Dodge believed in God and immortality, in the holy Sabbath, and in the duty of right living. When he visited Fortress Monroe in company with President Lincoln and other dignitaries he did not hesitate at the banquet to turn down his glass. He withdrew from the Union League Club when it became the customary thing for that association to serve intoxicating drinks. He resigned his directorship in three railways because they ran Sunday trains. Other men have like convictions, but not many are so scrupulous in their loyalty to them.

II. This, then, is our capital: ourselves, with our time and acquisitions. Now, then, arises the question, *What shall we do with it?* or *How shall we invest it?*

1. *We may play the miser with it.* In an old rookery in Harlem an aged man was recently found dead. His life had been passed in poverty and rigid abstinence; yet, when his home was searched, money was found in every nook and cranny; beneath his mattress, under his hearth,

bank-notes, bonds and mortgages, gold and silver coin in abundance. But what better were they than scraps of paper or iron pyrites? He had been no happier for them, the world had been no better for them.

2. *We may use our capital as spendthrifts do.* Let me speak in a familiar parable: A well-dressed youth entered an inn and made merry with gamesters and revellers all day. At evening, having paid his reckoning, he rose, and calling upon his comrades to follow him led the way to the river which flowed near by. Meanwhile he had called upon the musicians to play their merriest while he and his companions sang and danced down to the water's edge. He waded in, emptying his purse and throwing its contents out upon the shore. They thought it a strange diversion until he cried, "Good night!" and plunged beneath the water. A fool, do you say? Aye, but not more a fool than he who in like manner spends his life. For was not that day's folly an apologue of many a wasted life? We see the picture all the better for getting it into the focus of a single day.

3. *We may use our capital as wise and faithful stewards.* For, indeed, we are not our own; we belong to God by a double right—the right of creation and the right of purchase; for ye are bought with a price, not silver and gold, but the precious blood of Jesus, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Nor are our time and our acquisitions our own, but merely entrusted to us for wise investment. And if wisely invested whose are the dividends? 1. Our own, to begin with. It is our prime duty to make the most of ourselves. All that we are and all that we have are to be so used as to turn to our own advantage in the building up of character and influence. It is thus that we gain a hundred-fold here, and in the

time to come life everlasting. The great Edmund Burke had a brother, Richard, who was a ne'er-do-weel. After one of his wonderful speeches in the House of Commons an auditor said to this brother, "How is it that Edmund seems to have monopolized the talents of the family?" "Oh," he said, "while we were going hither and yon he was ever at work." It is not a question of diversity of gifts, but simply of right use. In this world nobody has a right to be nobody. 2. The dividends of our good investment accrue to others also. We are to use ourselves and our acquisitions for the good of those around us. This is to live like the ideal Man of whom it is written, "He went about doing good;" and there is abundant opportunity for this. Of all the multitude with whom we mingle there is not one who has not his burdens and heartaches. It is but the part of a true man to desire to lighten these burdens and to sweeten the lives of all. Sidney Smith said, "I have been making a calculation: if I make one person happy every day for ten years, I shall have made three thousand six hundred and fifty persons happy; that is, I shall have brightened a small town by my contribution to the fund of general joy." 3. The supreme and ultimate glory of a wise investment of ourselves and our possessions is God's. "The chief end of man is to glorify God." He is the owner of the talents, and they are to be invested for him. To question this fact is to form an inadequate conception of the purpose of life. The consummation of right living is reached when we can come to our Master, saying, "Lord, here is thy pound; it hath gained thee yet another pound." And the full fruition of life is reached when we hear him say, "Well done, good servant! Thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things."

Have we been forgetting God? Have we been leaving him out of the reckoning? This would be a dismal mistake, and fraught with infinite and eternal failure. When the Earl of Rochester had reached the end of his unscrupulous life he cried, "Oh, would that I had been a blind beggar or a leper rather than to have lived in the midst of glorious possibilities and forgotten God!" Here is the beginning and end of all—God! In the picture of the creation of man on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel the man is represented as lying upon a mossy mound reaching up his hand towards another stretched down from heaven, and from the hand of the Creator an electric spark is passing into him. The beginning of life is indeed to be thrilled through by the life of God; and this is the beginning of spiritual quickening. This is life eternal, to know God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent: to become partaker of his sublime purpose in the betterment of the race; to enter into his great hopes and aspirations; to live for him!

WHO IS THIS THAT COMETH FROM EDOM ?

“Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.” Isa. 63:1.

THE Israelites were compassed about by enemies: the Syrians on the north, the Philistines along the maritime plain, the Edomites on the south, were a constant menace to their peace; but the Edomites were their most troublesome foes. The old feud between Jacob and Esau had passed on from generation to generation with unabated force. It was the Edomites who most vigorously opposed the entrance into Canaan. It was the Edomites who, by their alliance with Babylon, ultimately effected the exile. Herod, who ordered the slaughter of the innocents, and Herod Antipas, who was coparcener in the murder of the Messiah, were both Idumeans. The greatness of this people is certified at this day by thirty ruined towns within three days' journey of the Dead Sea. They were Israel's nearest foe, ever hovering on their borders. A Jew wandering into their territory was certain to be captured. The flocks and herds of Israel were their common prey. The harvest and the vintage were seasons of special danger from this quarter. Indeed, there was scarcely an hour when Israel felt secure. Their land had been desolated until it was like a lodge in a garden of cucumbers.

The prophet, looking down one of the gorges towards

the Dead Sea, saw an heroic figure drawing near upon the heights. He was glorious in apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength. As he drew nearer it was seen that his garments were red with blood, as of one treading the wine-fat. "Who is this," cried the prophet, "that cometh from Edom with garments dyed in blood?" An important question for us, as for Israel in the olden time. Who is this Mighty One whose figure was projected upon the foreground of history so long ago? Our sins dwell, like the Edomites, upon our border. They lay gins and snares for our wandering feet; they fall upon us in our unwary hours: once over the border we are lost. Who shall deliver us from our nearest foe? The Mighty One draws near upon the heights for us; he has gone over into the land of Edom, the country of our sins. For us he has trodden the wine-press. This is our champion and defender returning from his strife with the adversary. This is the only-begotten Son of God.

I. *He is our avenger*; his garments are stained with the blood of his enemies and ours. "I looked," he says, "and there was none to help and I wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore my own arm brought salvation unto me, and my fury it upheld me."

1. Observe, there is fury in this triumphant Son of God. His name is Love? Aye. But he has also another name: A consuming fire. Indeed, the capability of love involves the capacity for wrath. The man who is so complacent in love and tenderness as that he can feel in his inmost heart no fiery wrath against crime and injustice is but a poor semblance of a true man. In like manner the God who, loving the things that are pure and lovely and of good report, should not hate the converse, would not be worthy of our adoration. Nor is this "an

Old Testament conception." The God of the Old Economy is also the God of the New; the same yesterday, to-day and for ever, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. The indignation that flamed forth in the imprecatory Psalms against the powers of darkness is the same that flashed from the pure lips of Jesus when he denounced hypocrisy, crying, "How shall ye escape the damnation of hell!" We stand under the opening of the sixth seal of the apocalypse, and lo! the sun becomes black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon is as blood; the stars of heaven fall to the earth as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when shaken before the wind; the heavens are rolled together as a parched scroll; and the earth rumbles under our feet; then kings and potentates, rich and mighty, masters and bondmen, hide themselves in sudden panic, crying to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him who sitteth on the throne, and from *the wrath of the Lamb!*" Aye; from the wrath of that merciful One, the meek and lowly Jesus, the Lamb of God.

2. Observe, this fury is against sin. In all the universe this is the only thing that God hates, and he hates it with an implacable fury. Why not? What has sin wrought upon the earth? If a malicious vandal had entered the workshop of the sculptor Phidias and broken into fragments his master-piece, the beautiful Apollo, would he have witnessed it with complacency, think you? Sin has ruined God's master-piece. It has discrowned man; it has blinded him to the beauty of all spiritual things; it has corrupted his heart, perverted his conscience, enfeebled his intellect, and paralyzed his will; it has placed the poisoned chalice at his lips crying, "Drink and die!" If God is indeed our Father, why should he not hate sin?

And why should he not go over into the land of Edom to avenge the wrong which it has inflicted upon us? Here is the *rationale* of the Incarnation: it is God in the person of Jesus Christ going over into the territory of the enemy to champion our cause.

3. For, observe, this manifestation of fury against sin is wholly in our behalf. The English were shut up in Lucknow; men, women and children were famishing there. The enemy, unspeakably cruel and implacable, had besieged the city. Off yonder on the heights was heard the shrill sound of the bagpipes. Havelock with his brave Scotchmen was coming to the rescue; but, alas! between Lucknow and those hills were the Sepoys. What shall become of the Sepoys? The rescuers draw near, their swords flash, their guns belch forth death, and the road from those hills to the beleagured city is covered with the slain.— Thus the only-begotten Son of God comes to deliver us, but deliverance is not possible except by the overthrow of Edom. Thus it comes about that his garments are stained with blood.

“The wine-press! The wine-press! The voice is from God;
The floor of his fury is now to be trod,
The sins of all nations are full to o’erflowing
And the blast of th’ avenger from heaven is blowing;
In the red robe of scourging triumphant he stands,
And blots out our sentence with blood in his hands!”

II. *Thus the avenger comes as our Saviour.* He avenges that he may save. God so hated sin that he sent his only-begotten Son to deliver us from the shame and bondage of it; as it is written, “His name shall be called Jesus, because he shall save his people from their sins.”

1. As he draws near upon the heights of Edom he is

alone; he trod the wine-press alone and there was none with him. In Oriental lands the vintage is the occasion of great rejoicing. From near and far the neighbors come, and encourage one another by shouting and singing while treading out the grapes. Not so, however, in the vintage of redemption; our Saviour trod it alone. As he entered the shadows of the olive grove he said to his disciples, "Tarry ye here, while I go yonder;" and there was none with him when he put the purple cup of death to his lips. As he entered the judgment-hall they all forsook him and fled. At Calvary he was so utterly alone that he must needs cry, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" The work was wholly his, in-somuch that any sinner who shall receive the benefit of his redemption must give him the sole glory, saying, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name!"

2. He cometh in the greatness of his strength. The stress of the mighty conflict in Edom has not wearied him. A few days ago we witnessed a procession of veterans of our Civil War. How few among them had returned scathless from the high places of the field! There were many who limped as they passed by; there were many who bore the scars of battle; there was scarcely one who walked in the fulness of his strength. But the strife of Calvary has not impaired the omnipotence of God's well-beloved Son. He is the mighty to save. His step is firm, his arm is strong, the dew of his youth is upon him.

3. He speaks in righteousness. In delivering us from Edom he has violated no principle of justice or equity. The great problem was, How shall God be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly? He solved it by taking our place before the offended law; he paid

the ransom ; he expiated our offences : “ He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, and by his stripes we are healed.”

But “ how can the innocent suffer for the guilty ? ” (1) It is done every day. The suffering of the innocent for the guilty is the commonest thing about us. Kings suffer for their subjects, parents for their children ; we are all suffering for others’ sins. (2) It is a recognized principle in Common Law, else why should I be taxed for the maintenance of prisons and reformatories ? (3) And who indeed has the right to object to this arrangement ? There are three parties to the covenant of grace : the Father, who is willing to send forth his Son to suffering and death in the sinner’s behalf ; the Son, who is willing to go, saying, “ Here am I, send me ; ” and the sinner, “ the party of the third part : ” it remains only for him to give his assent by accepting the plan, and then who is there in all the universe who shall have the right to object to it ?

4. He comes in glorious apparel. His blood-stained garments, as he draws nearer, are seen to be royal purple. In championing the cause of a sinful race he has established his right to rule over them. The crowning day is coming. The earth shall yet be filled with the acclamations of heaven : “ Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.” We ourselves shall join in praising him who, glorious with the victory wrought in the land of Edom, sitteth upon the throne, high and lifted up, saying, “ Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father ; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever.”

In this prophetic vision of the Redeemer we have outlined the only plan which has ever been proposed for the deliverance of the human race. There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved ; the Mighty One appeals to us in our own behalf, offering the full benefits of the vintage for naught.

At the burning of the Newhall House, in Milwaukee, a young man of my congregation was awakened from his sleep on one of the upper floors to find every avenue of escape cut off. He climbed to the window ledge, and holding by the sash looked down and called for help ; but the ladders were too short. There was not a fireman, there was not a soul in the multitude that thronged the streets who was not moved with the utmost desire to help, but no help was possible. At length he hung from the ledge by his finger tips ; hung for a little while, then dropped, while those below covered their eyes, and all was over. Not less desperate than his condition when hanging from that ledge is the state of the sinner outside of the plan of salvation, but Jesus is mighty to save ; able to save to the uttermost all that will believe in him. The ladder of his love is long enough to reach from beneath ; the arm of his omnipotence is mighty enough to reach down from above ; his promise is "Yea" and "Amen." Why then shall any be lost ? His sacrifice is sufficient to cover all the record of the misspent past. His hands are stretched out still. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that he came into the world to save sinners ; and this also is a faithful saying, He that believeth on Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, hath everlasting life.

JONAH AT NINEVEH.

“And Jonah began to enter into the city a day’s journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.” Jonah 3:4.

A SOLITARY traveller, of serious countenance, clad in a sheep-skin mantle bound with a hempen girdle about the loins, is pursuing his way from Palestine towards the northeast. He crosses the Jordan and climbs the heights beyond; then onward past the gates of old Damascus; onward through many weary days until, to his backward gaze, the peaks of anti-Lebanon have faded into the blue distance; then across the Euphrates, and still onward. The roads are broader now; there are signs of increased wealth and luxury; the weary traveller passes many a chariot and loaded wain, until at last he comes within sight of great Nineveh. Yonder are its walls—sixty miles in circumference, a hundred feet in height, and broad enough for three chariots to go abreast. He sees the glowing pinnacles of the temples of Bel and Nebo; banners are waving from a hundred towers; the broad roads are lined on each side with winged lions leading to the gates.

As the prophet draws near he stands still, overwhelmed with a feeling of reluctance. It is not fear; his sense of duty is strong enough to overcome all that. But he goes to preach repentance and pardon to the Ninevites. Is it strange that he is loth to enter yonder gate? He has been accustomed to think of Israel as God’s chosen peo-

ple, and of these Ninevites as dogs of Gentiles. Moreover, they have been from time immemorial the foes of Israel. His own home at Gath-hepher had been spoiled by these invaders. He hated them. He had gladly heard the prophet Joel say that they should be "trodden in the wine-press of the wrath of God." But now he must enter and preach mercy to them. He had refused the commission at first; but after the discipline of many sorrows the Voice had spoken again: "Go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach the preaching which I shall bid thee." He would fain escape from his task, but duty constrains him. He enters the great gate and straightway lifts his voice: "Yet forty days, yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed!" All day long, up and down the streets, in the shadow of the temples, before the palace door, "Yet forty days, yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed!" The people look out of their doorways and hearken to the weird cry; nobles stop their chariots and gaze with wonder: "Yet forty days, yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed!"

Observe, with reference to this sermon, (1) its brevity. Here are only eight words: only five in the original. There is no exordium nor peroration; there are no practical reflections. This is a sermon constructed after Luther's rule: "Stand up cheerfully, speak up manfully, leave off speedily." It is possible, however, to say a great deal in small compass. Homer's Iliad was once written in a nutshell. When Cæsar reported to Amintius his own campaign of conquest it was in three words: "*Veni, vidi, vici!*" Just before the fall of Richmond a telegram was received from Gen. Sheridan concluding thus: "If the thing is pressed I believe Lee will surrender;" to which the President replied, "Let it be

pressed." Brevity is the soul of wisdom as it is the soul of wit.

2. *Observe its perfect frankness.* The Lord had said to Jonah, "Go preach the preaching that I shall bid thee." He had no alternative. The doom had been passed upon that great city, and it was his business to admonish the people. The minister of the gospel in these days is under equally explicit orders. He is enjoined to declare the exceeding sinfulness of sin; to show that death comes following after; to declare the glad tidings that God has been pleased to make atonement for our sins; and to state with perfect clearness that the only hope and deliverance is in accepting the atonement of Jesus Christ, as it is written, "There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." This is the message, and the minister who refuses to deliver it in unmistakable terms is false to his divine commission. "Thus saith the Lord, If I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, he shall die in his sins, but his blood shall I require at thy hand." It is so easy to preach smooth things, and the downright truth is so old-fashioned, and the people have itching ears, and the "larger hope" is so popular! No matter; the preacher must be an honest man, and to be an honest man he must declare the whole counsel of God.

3. *Mark its directness.* Jonah mentioned no names, yet every arrow in his quiver reached its mark. It is not necessary that the proclamation of the gospel should be offensively personal. Such is its adaptation to the universal want of the race that no man can hear it faithfully proclaimed without saying, "That means me." Paul in the judgment-hall at Cæsarea reasoned of righteousness and temperance and judgment to come. Felix sat yon-

der with his paramour, Drusilla, beside him, and hearing the apostle set forth those tremendous truths he trembled, because he knew that in them judgment was pronounced against him. *Sermo* means a thrust. The people of Nineveh, hearing that their city was to be destroyed, must all with one accord have begun to ask within themselves, "What, then, will become of me?" This is the divine glory of the gospel. Its truths are of the most solemn importance to all sorts and conditions of men. It was this fact that moved Coleridge to say, "I believe that the Bible is inspired because *it finds me.*"

4. *This sermon was dogmatic.* We are blamed for dogmatizing in these days. But what else can we do? *Our* opinions in the pulpit are not of vital consequence; you must needs put them to the test, and receive or reject them upon their merits. But when we declare the divine message it must ever be "yea" and "amen." The introduction of doubtful phrases into the great truths robs them of all vital power; as if it were written, The soul that sinneth it *may* die; or, God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him need not *necessarily* perish but may *possibly* have eternal life; or, Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and *perhaps* I will give you rest; or, Ask, and *peradventure* ye shall receive; seek, and ye *may* find; knock, and *mayhap* it shall be opened unto you. Could we find life and immortality in a gospel set forth in such hypothetical phrases? Blessed be God, his word is "Verily, verily." Here are no "ifs" or "perhapses." It has been truly said that an "if" in the proclamation of heavenly mercy would be as disastrous as a charge of dynamite under the Rock of Ages.

We turn now to the result of Jonah's preaching. A

sure promise attaches to the faithful preaching of the word; as it is written: "My word shall not return unto me void," saith the Lord, "but shall accomplish that which I please and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

Observe (1) that the Ninevites "believed God." There was that in the prophet's voice, his visage, his impressive manner, which convinced them that his admonition was from above. Too often we hear a divine message as if the messenger were speaking for effect. Thus the people said of the preaching of Ezekiel, "Doth he not speak in parables?" And thus the message of Christ himself was received by multitudes of those who heard him. The awful pictures which he drew of the doom which shall ultimately overtake the impenitent are as true as ever.

" There is a death whose pang
 Outlasts this fleeting breath :
 Oh, what eternal horrors hang
 Around the second death !"

It is as a fire that shall never be quenched; it is as the gnawing of a worm that never dies; it is as an outer darkness without one gleam of hope for ever. When Jesus uttered these terrific truths, was he simply working on the people's fears? Was he trying to scare them? Oh, no; the words were laden with tremendous sincerity. And when Jonah declared the doom that had passed upon Nineveh it was meet that the people should believe him, because he spoke as an ambassador of God. In like manner we, knowing the terror of the Lord, persuade men, and it is the part of wisdom to believe that the message is true. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

2. *They proclaimed a fast:* i. e., they repented, and confessed their sin. The king put on sackcloth, the whole city was draped in mourning, the people cast dust and

ashes upon their heads, the very horses wore trappings of woe. The warning of the prophet had touched the hearts of all. No man was inclined to disguise his sorrow from his neighbor. We also are sinners and under like condemnation. Open confession is good for the soul: "If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

3. *They turned every one from his evil way.* The evil way of Nineveh was idolatry: they had forgotten the true God and bowed before images. Now they turned from their idols to Jehovah, and they turned also "from the violence of their hands." This people was prone to violence, to predatory excursion and war upon their neighbors. Now they hung up their swords and made war no more. Let it ever be remembered that repentance is not mere sorrow for sin, but also a turning from it. It is said that the Italian bandits come down from their mountain retreats at certain periods and visit the shrines in the village streets. They lay heaps of coin and necklaces of pearls, taken by violence from defenceless travellers, before the image of the Holy Virgin; and having thus paid tribute to their innate sense of retribution, they climb the mountains again and resume their evil ways. But true repentance means to give up sin. This is the sorrow that needeth not to be repented of. If we believe in God's oft-repeated warnings and admonitions, let us bring forth fruits meet for repentance: let us give up lying, dishonesty, covetousness, evil-speaking, selfishness, and whatsoever else is offensive to the Holy One.

4. *They cast themselves on the divine mercy,* saying, "Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" In Jonah's message there was not a suggestion of mercy.

But they reasoned thus: "God would not have sent this man to admonish us, and to proclaim a forty days' shrift, had he not meant to avert the evil. There is, then, a possibility that if we turn from our iniquities he will pardon and save us." So there was hope in their sorrow; and hope marks the difference between repentance and mere remorse.

At the door of the hall Gazith the traitor hurled his thirty pieces of silver upon the marble floor with the cry, "I have betrayed innocent blood!" and rushed forth to hang himself above the vale of Hinnom. This was remorse.

From the judgment-hall where Peter denied his Lord he went forth to weep bitterly; and cherishing the memory of his Lord's reproachful look he plucked up courage and returned to his first love. That was repentance.

There is forgiveness with God. His warnings are to the end that we may repent. Look up, O stricken sinner! to our God, who sitteth upon his throne of mercy. Look up! is the word of the captain to his son who reels at the top-mast. Look up! is the cry of the Alpine climber. To look down is to be overwhelmed with despair. Look up! away from self, away from the discouraging environment of temptation, away from the gloomy remembrance of past transgressions, up to where Christ standeth at the right hand of God to make intercession for us.

And what was the outcome of all this? The Ninevites were spared: God repented of the evil that he purposed to do unto them, and he did it not. A strange expression this. How can God repent? Is he not the same yesterday, to-day and for ever? Yes; but not with the stolid unchangeableness of a stone idol; *i. e.*, no eyes to

see, no heart to pity, no arms to reach forth towards the sorrowing. God's turning is a part of his eternal purpose; he always intended to save the Ninevites when they should forsake their sins. It looks like repentance on his part, but the narrator speaks after the manner of a man. I look from the window of a boat on the river and it seems to me as if the shore were moving; it is I, however, who am moving, while the shore stands still. Thus God seems to repent when the sinner repents and turns to righteousness. He is ever ready thus to bestow his pardoning grace on those who call upon him.

“Depth of mercy, can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?
Can my God his wrath forbear?
Me, the chief of sinners, spare?
* * * * *

“There for me the Saviour stands,
Shows his wounds and spreads his hands;
God is love: I know, I feel;
Jesus lives, and loves me still.”

THE NINEVITES IN JUDGMENT.

“ The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.” Matt. 12:41.

A SHORT sermon with a long sequel. Nearly a thousand years have passed since Jonah cried through the streets of Nineveh, “ Yet forty days, yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed !” and, lo, the echoes of that sermon are lingering still !

A word is an immortal thing. It is said that in twenty hours from its utterance the vibrations of sound have reached the entire volume of the atmosphere; thus our world, with its airy envelope, is a great whispering-gallery. Vows, prayers, songs of praise, the mutterings of idiocy, curses and blessings, Ebal and Gerizim, the wail of the processions that bore the Pharaohs to their tombs, the shouts of the triumphal procession of Titus bearing the golden candlestick of the Temple through the streets of Rome, all linger for ever.

In the company of those who listened to the preaching of Jesus were many captious scribes and Pharisees who ever clamored for a sign. He would not humor them. He is ever ready to answer a serious question, but makes no contribution to mere curiosity. They were an evil and adulterous generation, he said, and they should have no sign beyond what was already given; to wit, the sign of the prophet Jonah. The story of the old prophet, his

three days in darkness and his marvellous deliverance, had been given them as a foregleam of a glorious truth yet to be revealed. The miracle of the resurrection of Jesus was the key-stone of the gospel arch. Three days in the belly of hell, and then life and immortality brought to light. On this our Lord based the truth of his divine character and ministry. If they would not believe their Scriptures neither would they believe though one rose from the dead. They had abundant proof; they had lived in the very atmosphere of prophecy, they had the oracles, and angel voices had spoken to them. Oh, the responsibility of privilege! The men of Nineveh, to whom Jonah had preached his simple sermon, had believed and turned from their sins; but these cavilling Jews, ever clamoring for a sign, were absolutely hardened against the truth. Their wasted privileges would be their doom. The men of Nineveh would stand forth against them in the judgment because they had hearkened to the preaching of Jonah, and, behold, a greater than Jonah was here.

The Ninevites, then, were not dead. Their city was buried long ago. The Lord said (700 B. C.) by the lips of his prophet Nahum, "I will make thy grave." The great metropolis, proud, luxurious, fell at last under the burden of its sins, and was buried like a worn-out voluptuary. Its splendid halls became the haunt of owls and jackals. Naught remains of it at this day but a mass of magnificent ruins to attest its former glory.

And their gods also were dead. Time was when kings bowed down before them, when conquerers brought garlands and hung about their necks, when men and women poured out the story of their agony before them; but now the winged bulls of old Nineveh may be seen in

the British Museum, in the midst of great London—bulls with human faces bearing a mystified look, as if bewildered with the roar and hurry of modern life. Dead now, and none so poor to do them reverence. But the men of Nineveh still live on in the influence of their mighty deeds. The oldest burying-ground in the world is where they lie in stone-lined chambers by the side of the great river. They were buried with their hands stretched out towards dishes of food and weapons and implements of toil, as if to speak of a life beyond. They were buried with their faces towards the west, towards the sunset; but the setting of the sun prophesies the rising thereof. There is no night without a morning; the shadows gather, there is silence under the stars, then the night breaks.

In 1842 the antiquarian Botta, while digging among the ruins of this old metropolis, came upon a massive structure which he rightly supposed to be the palace of Sennacherib. The top of the wall was lined with sculptured slabs written all over in cuneiform characters. Here also were prisms and tablets and cylinders and volumes of the past, books of science, grammars, and dictionaries. Here were royal decrees and deeds of sale. Here was the last will and testament of King Sennacherib. Here the mighty thoughts of the past were stereotyped. This was the royal library. The clay that was packed upon these volumes had so sealed them from the atmosphere that on being exhumed they were as fresh as if written yesterday. As we stand among these venerable records it is as if the dead were living before us—Sargon, Rabshakeh, Assurbanipal, Tiglath-pileser; here they are lifting their cups in wassail or flashing their swords before us.

But the Ninevites live not merely in influence, but in an actual existence somewhere in the spirit world. This

is not the time to dwell upon the argument for immortality; it is enough that the men of Nineveh, in common with all nations, received it. Here is a universal tenet: there is no death; the king of terrors has no power over an immortal man. He may destroy the house we live in; he can break its bones and burn its flesh and scatter its ashes; but, after all, he can do no more than drive its tenant out. What we call death is mere eviction. While death destroys the dwelling its tenant stands yonder upon some hillside looking on.

And the men of Nineveh are to appear again; they shall stand forth in judgment—in judgment! A stupendous fact. We shall behold them in that day.

1. *The judgment is coming.* The Scriptures abound in references to “that great day.” I can remember the call of the court crier from the steps of the old Court House, “Oyez! oyez!” in the frontier village long ago, and they could be seen coming from tavern and along the streets, jurors, litigants, lawyers, and hangers-on, all to attend the court. So shall the trumpet sound and the dead shall arise; from the sea, from the land, they shall come to the great assize. All will be there: souls slain in battle, the slaughtered innocents, popes and victims of the Inquisition, the poor wretch who was dragged out of the river yesterday, the millionaire who died with his hand clutching his wealth wrung from widows and orphans, formal professors, the cultured infidels of Christendom, the multitudes who died in the darkness of barbarism, the men of Nineveh and the men of New York, all will be there. Oh, the sea of faces!

2. *The judgment is a necessary factor in the moral economy of the universe.* There is but a faint show of justice in the present administration of affairs—all things

awry, at odds and ends. The poor are cast down and the wicked exalted. Rewards go where penalties should fall, and *vice versa*. Can we suppose this to be the end? Everywhere else in the universe, save in the moral province, there is a perfect equilibrium; the sun draws no more water from the sea than the lakes can receive and the rivers carry back again to the sea. If the pressure of the atmosphere were a trifle more or less the earth would fall into fragments. A little less heat and the earth would be frozen; a little more and it would be burned up. A little more electricity in the air and our system would be a magazine of destructive forces. But everything in the physical world is just right. Must we not believe that there is to be a final adjustment in the province of moral things? Ay; the heavens shall be rolled back and yonder will sit the Judge upon his throne. In his hand a great book, and the book shall be opened. The ledger! Then will come the evening-up, to every one his due.

3. *The judgment will be administered in absolute equity.* Here we misunderstand each other; we judge by the sight of our eyes.

“Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord—its various tone,
Each spring—its various bias.”

All things will enter into consideration: our nature, temperament, our heredity, environment, training, temptation; nothing will be forgotten then. And as no false sentence will be possible, so there can be no complaint or plea for a new trial. Those to whom the Judge shall say, “Depart!” will unite with those to whom he says, “Come, ye blessed!” in ascribing to him an absolute fairness. “The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous

altogether." Then we shall understand the strange providences that so puzzle us now. We shall see the divine goodness above all. As Whittier sings,

"God's ways seem dark, but soon or late
They touch the shining hills of day."

4. One important factor in the ultimate decisions of the great day will be *the measure of our light*. We are moved to ask, "What is to become of the heathen? Are they to be cast into hell for not accepting the gospel which they never heard?" Oh, no. They shall be responsible only for their measure of light and shall be punished only for not living up to it; as it is written, "To whom much is given, of them shall much be required."

I see a group of rabbis drawing near wearing their broad phylacteries and frontlets on which is written, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord!" and saying to the Judge, "What hast thou for us?" And while they wait the penitent thief draws near, saying, "I saw the Redeemer but once and my heart was smitten. I repented and believed in him." And to this man the Judge shall say, "Enter into the kingdom of thy Lord."

I see a procession of vestal virgins drawing near, who say, "We kept the sacred fires alive; we illuminated missals and breviaries; we sang the matins and vespers. What hast thou for us?" And yonder the Magdalene draws near with downcast face, saying, "I heard thee as thou wast preaching in the streets, saying, 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;' and with my burden of sin and shame upon me I came and anointed thy feet." And at her word the room seems filled with the odor of the precious nard and the Judge says, "Enter into the joy of thy Lord."

An army of Crusaders draws near. They bear the scars

of service ; they say, " We fought for the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre and made battle beneath the walls of Acre. What hast thou for us ?" A little lad draws near, modestly saying, " I had the basket of loaves and fishes, and when thy disciples said, ' Give it for the hunger of the multitude, ' I freely gave it." And the Judge bids him also " Enter into the joy of thy Lord."

Here are a multitude of nominal Christians, their names on the church-roll as members in good and regular standing, and they say, " Lord, we lived in the shadow of the sanctuary, sat at the sacramental table, said our prayers and paid our tithes with strict regularity. What hast thou for us ?" And, lo, here come the men of Nineveh : " We heard thy prophet once ; we heard his warning of approaching danger ; we believed that to the penitent thou wouldst be merciful ; we bowed ourselves in sorrow before thee and besought thy pardon." And to these the Judge says, " Enter into the joy of thy Lord."

Oh, the surprises of that day ! There will be many passing through heaven's gate who are lit along the way by a single rushlight, and there will be many who, despite an unspeakable wealth of privilege, shall be shut out for ever. Do we ask, " What is to become of the heathen ?" A far more pertinent question is this : " What is to become of you and me ?" It is greatly to be feared that Zulus, Bechuanas and Hottentots will point their fingers at some of us in that day. We were ushered into the world with prayer. We were soothed to sleep with sacred melodies. We were taught to say, " Our Father which art in heaven ;" to read our Bibles ; to revere our confessions of faith. The sound of the church bell has ever been in our ears. We have lived under the shadow of the cross, yet some of us have never accepted

Christ, preferring to bear the burden of our own sin. Oh! what is to become of us?

And now one more privilege: this sermon has in it the possibility of eternal good or evil. The sunbeam that falls with nourishing power upon a living bud, to bring forth beauty and fragrance from it, brings doom to a stem detached from the tree. So is it with every discourse. It has a savor of life unto life, or death unto death. I lift up Christ again to-day, saying to you, a sinner, "He died for you, and he that believeth in Christ hath everlasting life." In this brief message is the possibility of eternal felicity. I pray you hear it.

BR 85

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: March 2005

PreservationTechnologies

A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 013 374 042 9

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 029 557 477 A